

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians Passes Resolution to Banish Wisconsin State Senator Mary Felzkowski from Tribal Lands**

**Lac du Flambeau, WI** – On September 9, 2024, the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians' Tribal Council passed a resolution to banish Wisconsin State Senator Mary Felzkowski from the Lac du Flambeau Indian Reservation. This unprecedented action follows remarks made by Senator Felzkowski on August 23, 2024, during a public meeting held at the Woodruff Town Hall, in which she equated the Tribe to "terrorists" amid discussions concerning the ongoing dispute between the Tribe and the Town of Lac du Flambeau regarding the Town's trespass on tribal lands.

The Tribal Council condemned Senator Felzkowski's remarks as particularly irresponsible and disrespectful given her role as co-chair of the current Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations, a position that carries a responsibility to foster mutual understanding and respect between the State of Wisconsin and Tribal Governments. The Council further emphasized that her comparison of the Tribe to terrorists has deeply offended tribal members, descendants, and employees, who see this language as an attack on their sovereignty, identity, and heritage.

The dispute centers around the Town of Lac du Flambeau's unauthorized use and occupation of Tribal lands. The Tribal Council has long sought resolution to this issue, which involves the violation of the Tribe's territorial sovereignty. The Tribe maintains that it has a legal duty, as guaranteed by the 1854 Treaty with the Chippewa, to protect its lands from unlawful encroachment and trespass.

**President John Johnson Sr.** of the Lac du Flambeau Tribal Council emphasized the gravity of Senator Felzkowski's remarks:

*"The comparison of the Lac du Flambeau Tribe to terrorists such as the Proud Boys and the Taliban, organizations with no sovereignty or treaty rights, and that seek to harm the United States, is not only offensive but dangerously misinformed. It reveals a profound ignorance of the legal standing of our Tribe and the obligations owed to us under the 1837, 1842, and 1854 Treaties. Those treaties, which established our reservation as a permanent homeland, recognize our sovereign right to protect our lands and people. Senator Felzkowski's comments, made during an already tense discussion about the Town's trespass on our lands, have only escalated tensions and further show how uninformed she is concerning Tribal communities and respect for the law. We met with Senator Felzkowski months ago at a Tribal Council meeting and she had the nerve to tell our Council she did not represent us, and she instead represents individual landowners and the Town Board that continues to trespass over our lands."*

The 1854 Treaty between the United States and the Chippewa Nation formally established the Lac du Flambeau Reservation as the Tribe's permanent homeland, guaranteeing the Tribe's sovereign rights to govern and protect its lands. The ongoing dispute with the Town of Lac du Flambeau stems from the town's failure to respect these treaty rights, and the Tribal Council has been steadfast in its legal duty to protect tribal lands from any unauthorized use or occupation.

Senator Felzkowski's remarks came during a public meeting focused on resolving the trespass issue, a longstanding matter that has hindered relations between the Tribe and the town. Tribal leaders argue that her comments not only damage the prospects for constructive dialogue but also demonstrate a disregard for the Tribe's sovereign rights and its role as a governmental authority tasked with protecting its lands and people.

The Tribal Council emphasized that Senator Felzkowski's comparison of the Tribe to terrorists is not only deeply harmful but also threatens the fragile negotiations surrounding the dispute. The Council remains committed to protecting its lands and people, as required by law, and will not allow such inflammatory rhetoric to derail their efforts to seek justice.

For more information or to request interviews with Tribal leaders, please contact the Tribal Public Relations Representative, Araia Breedlove.

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#### **About the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians**

The Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians is a federally recognized sovereign Native American Tribe with a rich cultural heritage. The Tribe's reservation, established by the Treaty of 1854, serves as a permanent homeland and is the cornerstone of the Tribe's sovereign rights to self-governance and territorial integrity. The Tribe is committed to preserving its culture, protecting its lands, and advancing the well-being of its members.

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