

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation Business Committee

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Fond du Lac Band Exercises its Sovereignty in Protecting its Band Members and Resources



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Dist. II Representative
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Executive Director,
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Executive Director,
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Terry Savage

Fond du Lac Lake Superior Chippewa, MN, February 23rd, 2021 - Last week, an incident in which a potential explosive device was thrown into a pipeline construction site within the Fond du Lac (FDL) Reservation prompted a bomb threat notification and subsequent evacuation in frigid temperatures. The emergency alert created widespread public safety concerns during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and caused major disruptions to Band operations.

“Although we as FDL people have a long tradition of extending hospitality to respectful visitors, family and friends, last week’s incident was a betrayal of our openness and has forced us to remind FDL Band members and non-members, alike, that FDL leadership will not tolerate violence or threats of violence within our community,” said Band Chairman Kevin R. Dupuis, Sr.

The Reservation Business Committee (RBC) respects the right to voice dissent peacefully, but attempts to intimidate and disrupt the lives of FDL Band members are neither peaceful nor respectful of the Band’s sovereignty. As the governing body of the FDL nation, the RBC is unequivocal on its stance of rejecting anyone coming to the FDL Reservation to endanger FDL residents.

“We have a responsibility to promote public safety and protect the health and welfare of our people,” Dupuis said. “In order to uphold that responsibility, the RBC has a simple message to outside protestors instigating violence and violating Band law: Leave now. You are not welcome here.”

The incident last week remains under investigation and the RBC expects that the perpetrators will face serious legal consequences. FDL government officials and the FDL Police Department are working with local, state, and federal agencies on the investigation. Furthermore, when outside protestors violate Band laws, the Band will take appropriate legal action. Currently, the Band is investigating violations of the Band’s land use ordinance and COVID-19 orders.

The Band’s decision to enter into an agreement with Enbridge was made after extensive consideration. “A tribal, sovereign decision has been made. After numerous meetings, as well as thoughtful and careful deliberation by our elders reflecting on our community’s values and of those yet to come, we stand by that decision,” Dupuis said. “We ask that the public respect our sovereignty. Outsiders’ actions, regardless of intention, are diverting limited resources away from protecting our community and the community at large.”

The Chairman emphasized tribal governments speak for tribes. “It is offensive and inappropriate for non-Indians and outsiders to claim they are here to protect the Band and

resources,” Dupuis said. “Nonprofits and environmental organizations cannot and do not speak for federally recognized sovereign Indian tribes.”

About the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Nagaajiwanaang; where the water stops) is one of six Chippewa Indian Bands that make up the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. The Fond du Lac Reservation was established by the La Pointe Treaty of 1854. Archaeologists, however, maintain that ancestors of the present-day Chippewa (Ojibwe) have resided in the Great Lakes areas since 800 A.D. The Band includes 4,200 members.

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