

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 2, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretaries Buttigieg and Haaland:

We write to request your immediate assistance regarding the ongoing situation in Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin. On January 31, 2023, the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indian Tribe (hereafter “the Tribe”) began denying public passage on four town roads. While this appears to be a contractual dispute between the Tribe and property owners, the road blockade restricts the ability of several dozen Wisconsinites to leave their homes to access their workplaces or restricts emergency services and necessities like groceries or prescription medications. We hoped this situation could be resolved through agreement between the Tribe and property owners, but after a full month, we no longer believe this is the case. It is imperative that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) intervene before this dispute becomes more dangerous for these affected homeowners.

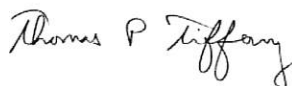
We understand the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP). Further, we understand the Tribe is recognized by BIA as eligible for federal funding and services. We also understand BIA currently possesses fair market value appraisals of the land in dispute that was submitted by an independent third-party.

In order to more expediently resolve this dispute for the safety of our constituents, we respectfully request information and/or answers to the following:

1. Copies of the above-mentioned appraisals for Annie Sunn Lane, Center Sugarbush Lane, East Ross Allen Lake Lane, and Elsie Lake Lane that BIA currently possesses.
2. Since Fiscal Year 2013, the total amount of federal funding administered to the Tribe through the TTP or other programs for the four roads listed in question 1.
3. Information regarding any requirements levied to federal grant beneficiaries, specifically the Tribe as they relate to the maintenance, continuous access and operation of these TTP roads.
4. Any analysis conducted by FHWA, BIA, or other federal agency on the legality of the Tribe blocking access to these roads.
5. Any analysis of the authority of FHWA, BIA, or other federal agency to order the removal of the Tribe’s road barricades.
6. Is the only way for a road to get listed as part of the TTP to receive federal funding?

Please provide us with a detailed written response to our offices no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, March 10, 2023. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress



Ron Johnson
U.S. Senator