



# SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE

P.O. BOX 359 • FORT TOTTEN, ND 58335 • PHONE 701-766-4221 • FAX 701-766-4126

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 5, 2025

### Spirit Lake Tribe Opposes SB 2376, Calls for Tribal Consultation Before Gaming Expansion

**FORT TOTTEN, ND** – The Spirit Lake Tribe formally opposes Senate Bill 2376, which seeks to authorize a new casino permit in Grand Forks County.

Before addressing this opposition, the Spirit Lake Tribe wishes to acknowledge the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians (TMBCI), whose leadership and friendship are deeply valued. The longstanding relationship between the two tribes is built on kinship, respect, and shared commitment to their people. Last fall, the Spirit Lake Tribe received a white buffalo from Turtle Mountain, a sacred gift met with immense gratitude and reverence. This opposition to SB 2376 is in no way a reflection of division or disrespect toward TMBCI but rather a response to a legislative process that did not adequately include all affected tribal nations. The Spirit Lake Tribe believes the lack of consultation was a misjudgment rather than an intentional oversight.

The fundamental concern with SB 2376 is that it was introduced without formal government-to-government consultation with the Spirit Lake Tribe and possibly other tribal nations. Tribal sovereignty and intergovernmental relations require that tribes be engaged as equal partners in decisions impacting their economies, livelihoods, and communities.

Tribal gaming remains a primary economic driver for Spirit Lake, as it does for many tribal nations. Revenue from gaming operations sustains vital services such as education, healthcare, housing, and infrastructure. The introduction of a new gaming facility in Grand Forks County threatens to divert critical revenue away from existing tribal casinos, including the Spirit Lake Casino and Resort, potentially jeopardizing the financial stability of tribal nations reliant on gaming for essential services.

Furthermore, this bill raises concerns based on past state decisions, such as the expansion of non-tribal gaming through electronic pull-tab machines, which significantly harmed tribal gaming enterprises without prior consultation. SB 2376 appears to repeat that pattern, setting a concerning precedent for future gaming expansions without proper engagement with tribal governments.

This opposition is not about creating division but about upholding tribal sovereignty and ensuring that economic opportunities do not come at the expense of existing tribal gaming enterprises. The Spirit Lake Tribe remains committed to working collaboratively to protect and strengthen the economic foundations of all tribal nations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lonna J. Street".

Lonna J. Street

Chairwoman – Spirit Lake Tribe

#### For media inquiries, please contact:

Vicki Alberts

VickiA@spiritlakenation.com

701.766.4221