

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 8, 2020

Chairman Richard Shelby
Ranking Member Leahy
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Chairwoman Nita Lowey
Ranking Member Kay Granger
House Appropriations Committee
H-307
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Members Leahy and Granger:

We write to urge you to ensure the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians' Tribal fishery in our state is included as an eligible inland fishery for any future assistance provided by Congress in response to economic losses caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Because the upper and lower basins of Red Lake are not part of the Great Lakes watershed, we urge you to include the below language that would ensure the inclusion of the Red Lake Tribal fishery in any new definition of eligible fisheries.

As you know, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided \$300 million to aid fisheries impacted by the pandemic. Unfortunately, the Department of Commerce determined that fisheries located outside a coastal state were ineligible for assistance under the Act.

The Red Lake Tribal fishery in northern Minnesota is the oldest and largest walleye commercial fishery in the United States with an annual harvest quota of 1.1 million pounds of walleye from Upper and Lower Red Lake, including subsistence fishing of nearly 100,000 pounds. The direct economic impact has been estimated at over \$1.2 million in payments and wages to local band members.

The fishery at Red Lake has experienced economic impacts due to the pandemic and deserves similar assistance to that which was provided under the CARES Act. That is why we are concerned that both the HEROES Act passed by the House and the HEALS Act proposed in the Senate would continue to disqualify them.

The Red Lake Tribal fishery is also the only Tribal fishery in the United States that is regulated by the Secretary of the Interior. It is for this reason that we strongly recommend the below language be included in any future relief package in response to economic losses caused by the coronavirus pandemic:

“The amount provided under this heading in this Act shall be allocated to... and include federally recognized Tribes in the Great Lakes basin and any Tribal commercial fishery regulated by the Secretary of the Interior in 25 CFR Part 242.”

As the Red Lake Tribal fishery is the only commercial Tribal fishery in the United States that is regulated by the Secretary of the Interior, this definition would encompass both Red Lake and the Great Lakes Basin fisheries in the definition of eligible Tribal fisheries.

Again, we urge you to explicitly make the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians' Tribal fishery in our state eligible for any future assistance provided by Congress to respond to economic losses caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress

CC: Chairman Roger Wicker, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

CC: Ranking Member Maria Cantwell, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation