

RED LAKE BAND

of CHIPPEWA INDIANS

RED LAKE NATION HEADQUARTERS



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RED LAKE TRIBAL COUNCIL

Official Statement for Public and Media Release

October 17, 2026

To the People of the Red Lake Nation,

Our Nation is facing a difficult and painful time. The recent public release of the Department of the Interior's letter concerning the federal reassumption involving Ombimindwaa Gidinawemaaganinaadog (Ombi) has raised serious concerns about the safety and well-being of our children, the responsibilities of our government, and the trust our people place in those entrusted to serve them.

First and foremost, we acknowledge the children and families who have suffered, especially those who have experienced the heartbreaking loss of a child. We recognize the grief these families continue to carry and the importance of honoring their loved ones with compassion, dignity, and respect. As Anishinaabeg, our children are sacred, and their protection and well-being must remain at the center of our responsibilities to one another.

We also recognize the fear and uncertainty surrounding federal involvement in our child welfare system. Our people know the painful history of government policies that separated Anishinaabe children from their families, communities, and culture. That history is not forgotten. We have a responsibility to protect our inherent sovereignty while ensuring that our children remain safe, connected to their families, and grounded in who they are while acknowledging that we know best how to accomplish this as a Nation.

We understand that the information recently made public has raised difficult questions throughout our Nation. While certain information and characterizations contained in the letter remain disputed or require further clarification, we are conducting an internal review to gather and verify relevant facts in support of our ongoing mediation and appeal process. Given the sensitive nature of these matters, we must be mindful of what can be publicly discussed while protecting the privacy and rights of everyone involved.

The Red Lake Tribal Council recognizes that accountability is essential to good governance and applies to everyone entrusted with serving our Nation, including elected leadership. We remain committed to responsible oversight, transparency, and ensuring that our decisions are guided by integrity, fairness, and the best interests of our people.

Our sovereignty is not simply our inherent right to govern ourselves. It also carries the responsibility to govern with wisdom, integrity, and accountability to the people of the Red Lake Nation.

As Anishinaabeg, we are guided by the Seven Grandfather Teachings of Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. These teachings remind us to lead with compassion, approach difficult decisions with courage and humility, and remain committed to the well-being of our relatives and future generations.

We recognize that healing will not happen overnight, nor will it come from words alone. Our healing journey must begin together, grounded in accountability, rebuilding trust, strengthening our systems, and a shared commitment to the well-being of our people. This requires respectful conversations, a willingness to listen, and meaningful efforts to improve the programs and services entrusted with caring for our relatives. As elected leaders, we understand that maintaining the trust of our people requires accountability through our actions.

Our ultimate goal remains the same: protecting our children, supporting our families, restoring and strengthening our child welfare services, and preserving the sovereignty of the Red Lake Nation. We have begun taking appropriate corrective steps and remain committed to working alongside our employees, federal agencies, and our people to strengthen our programs and pursue the restoration of Tribal child welfare services as quickly and responsibly as possible. We remain committed to standing by our employees, supporting our programs, and serving our people as we navigate these challenges together.

We cannot change the pain and uncertainty our families have experienced, but we can choose how we move forward. We owe it to our children, families, and the generations yet to come to approach this journey with compassion, integrity, and meaningful action.

Our children deserve to be protected. Our families deserve to be heard. Our people deserve a government committed to accountability, transparency, and earning their trust through its actions.

Together, guided by our Anishinaabeg values and teachings, we can begin the journey toward healing, strengthening our Nation, and building a better future for generations to come.

Red Lake Tribal Council