

RED LAKE BAND of CHIPPEWA INDIANS

RED LAKE NATION HEADQUARTERS



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RICHARD BARRETT, SR.
ROBERT "CHARLIE" REYNOLDS

ADVISORY COUNCIL:
7 HEREDITARY CHIEFS

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June 12, 2015

Minneapolis City Council
City Hall, Room 307
350 South Fifth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear City of Minneapolis Council Members:

I am writing today to request that you vote against the staff recommendation to authorize the City of Minneapolis' Property Services division to begin negotiations with the owners of Roof Depot at 1860 28th Street East and 2717 Longfellow Avenue South for municipal acquisition and operations. This proposal will be before the Ways and Means Committee on June 15, 2015 and the full City Council on June 19, 2015.

The Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians has hundreds of tribal members that live within the East Phillips neighborhood. Our urban embassy is located within this neighborhood and historically many of our tribal members have resided here. I believe that our tribal members in this area need more access to jobs and a clean neighborhood to live in.

I believe that the City acquisition of Roof Depot does not align with the City's own racial equity work and expressed commitment to supporting environmental justice. The Phillips area is designated by the Met Council as a Racially Concentrated Area of Poverty—it is a majority low-income, Indigenous and People of Color community with more children (a vulnerable population) than any other neighborhood in Minneapolis. East Phillips is a Residential Arsenic Superfund site, and one of two areas in Hennepin County with the highest incidences of elevated blood lead levels and asthma hospitalizations in small children (the other being the near Northside of Minneapolis). It is the site of a foundry, an open air hot asphalt plant, and already carries the burden of two industrially-zoned City of Minneapolis facilities—a garbage transfer station and a Public Works facility.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth states that "Through promoting and protecting the civil rights of the citizens of Minneapolis, sources of environmental pollution will not be concentrated in neighborhoods of one race or ethnicity, near sensitive populations, or in economically disadvantaged areas." By putting the water distribution function in East Phillips, the City would be further concentrating air pollution and negatively impacting air quality by adding more heavy truck traffic and welding emissions to this already environmentally overburdened community.

TRIBAL COUNCIL Organized April 18, 1918 (Revised Constitution & By-Laws, January 6, 1959)

CHIEF COUNCIL OF 1889: May-dway-gwa-no-nind, Nah-gaun-e-gwon-abe, Mays-co-co-caw-ay, Ahnah-me-ay-ge-shig, Naw-ay-tah-wowb; Nah-wah-quay-ge-shig

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I am deeply concerned about the lack of community engagement and transparency around this proposal. Despite the lack of consultation with the community, the residents of East Phillips and their Neighborhood organization, cultural groups, and faith communities have come together and held a series of robust community conversations about the City's proposal. Residents have expressed a multitude of concerns related to this project: the environmental and livability impacts of increased truck traffic, emissions associated with welding, and that this proposal would take a piece of prime industrial land off the tax rolls permanently without bringing any good jobs to the community. They have come together and are calling on their elected officials to say no to the acquisition of the Roof Depot site by the City of Minneapolis.

I hope I can count on you to stand with the Phillips community by voting against the staff recommendation to begin negotiating for the purchase of the Roof Depot site.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrell G. Seki, Sr.", written in a cursive style.

Darrell G. Seki, Sr.
Tribal Chairman
Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians