

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement by the Tribal Council of the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians

The Lac Vieux Desert Tribe (LVD) was federally recognized on September 8, 1988. The federal recognition process mandated the Tribe to draft a constitution for tribal membership (citizen) approval. The LVD Constitution is the supreme law of the land for the Tribe. The rights of *all* tribal members are protected by the Constitution. Any tribal member that is elected to office by a majority vote takes an oath of office to uphold the LVD Constitution.

The LVD Tribal Council has been ordered to jail, but that is *nothing* compared to what our ancestors sacrificed for us in order to have what we have today as a sovereign nation.

We are currently being criminally punished for upholding our Constitution. The entire nine (9)-member Tribal Council was put -- and remains -- in jail for alleged contempt of a court order, with no bail, no hearing, and no due process until we succumb to a court order that mandates us to blatantly disregard our Constitution and separation of powers. This court order was issued by Judge Bradley Dakota of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, who, pursuant to our Constitution, is not even eligible to preside over cases in LVD Tribal Court because he is neither a LVD tribal citizen, nor is he a licensed attorney.

It is unfortunate that we have become the victims of such corruption at the hand of our own tribal law enforcement and judicial system. In addition, at the onset of the dispute, our former Tribal Attorney Jay Finch refused to represent the Tribal Council and tribal government, and did not appear in court to represent us. He outright told the Tribal Council that he didn't want anything to do with the proceedings. Moreover, it is apparent that the Bureau of Indian Affairs' representative Gerald Parish did not respond appropriately to the frivolous allegations made against the Tribal Council. And now here we sit.

Background

Tribal citizen and Council candidate Patricia Pete's civil and constitution rights were violated by the LVD Election Board when it denied her placement on the election ballot. There were a total of six (6) different challenges to the Tribal Judiciary alleging improprieties by the Election Board via tribal ordinances and the LVD Constitution. On August 2, 2010, Judge Bradley Dakota issued a court order that there would be a new election, but when his written opinion was delivered two weeks later, it was entirely different from the verbal order. The Tribal Council received proof that there were *ex parte* communications with Judge Dakota from a candidate for Tribal Chairman, Alan Shively. Chi-miigwetch (many thanks) to our ancestors for instilling in us and instilling in our "blood memory" the courage and strength we need to have in order to do what is right to protect our people.

The Tribal Council holds fast to the belief that they are doing what is right. In the end, when all the facts are presented to a properly seated judge, vested with the Constitutional authority to hear cases in LVD Tribal Court, the Tribal Council will be fully vindicated. More importantly, this entire situation will serve as an educational tool for our youth and future leaders.