



## LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE

*Carri Jones, Tribal Chair*  
*Arthur "Archie" LaRose, Secretary-Treasurer*

*Penny DeVault, District I Representative*  
*Steve White, District II Representative*  
*LeRoy Staples Fairbanks III, District III Representative*

February 2, 2016

Dear Commissioner Matt Massman, Honorable Paul Anderson, Senator David Senjem, and Representative Diane Loeffler:

Thank you for facilitating our meeting on January 13, 2016. Your diligence in assessing the Capitol art situation is appreciated. We see great potential for healing between non-natives and the Ojibwe and Dakota people through making changes to the art during the Capitol renovation process. We are looking forward to your preliminary recommendation to the Capitol Preservation Commission this month and remain hopeful you will urge the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) to take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

As we discussed in our meeting, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe reiterates our original recommendation to remove offensive, traumatizing paintings from the Capitol, including *The Discoverers and Civilizers Led to the Source of the Mississippi*; *Father Hennepin Discovering the Falls of St. Anthony*; *The Signing of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux*; and *The Battle of Killdeer Mountain*. As noted by Justice Paul Anderson in our discussions, the placement of offensive and traumatizing paintings in areas of importance within the Capitol is crucial to a successful resolution results in a welcoming environment for all people in Minnesota. These areas, such as the governor's reception room, are seen in numerous news interviews, by visiting dignitaries, and by the thousands upon thousands of citizens who visit the Capitol on an annual basis.

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is not advocating for the destruction of the offensive and traumatizing paintings, but rather to have them moved to a new home where they can be remembered and interpreted in a way that more accurately reflects history and culture. We also believe any controversial artwork remaining in the Capitol should be accompanied by interactive narratives that describe the discussion regarding Native American history and culture.

We again recommend MHS conduct a review of the information Capitol tour guides provide, especially to the many school groups that tour the Capitol each year, and consult with Minnesota's tribes to ensure its accuracy.

We believe an opportunity exists and hope the Capitol Preservation Commission will recommend new art be included in the Capitol building that reflects and honors Minnesota's ethnic and cultural diversity. We ask that you consult with tribes directly to ensure the best possible art is selected that is true to Minnesota's history and culture.

When school students tour the Capitol, when foreign dignitaries visit, when elected officials deliberate, we believe it's important to be accurate and representative of all Minnesotans. Our Minnesota State Capitol art needs to show that all people are welcome and have a place at the Capitol's decision-making table. We believe these historical artifacts need to be remembered, but the Capitol is the wrong place for this art. It sends the wrong message. This art needs to be moved to a museum where it can be better interpreted.

Again, we commend you for actively engaging with Minnesota's tribal leaders. On behalf of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe with its nearly 10,000 Band members, we encourage ongoing discussions and consultation so that artwork displayed in the Capitol upon its opening in 2017 is welcoming to all Minnesotans.

Thank you for your consideration, and your work on behalf of all Minnesotans. Please do not hesitate to contact myself or our Government Relations Specialist Angela Nordman at (218) 335-8246.

Sincerely,



Carri Jones  
Chairwoman  
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe