



City of Duluth Communications Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City to seek court injunction to uphold casino contract

The Fond du Lac Band has notified the City of Duluth of their intent to immediately cease all payments to the City related to the operation of the Fond du Luth Casino. The Casino has been operating since 1986 pursuant to the gaming rights agreements of 1986 and 1994 between the Band and the City of Duluth. The Band contends that the agreements were based on erroneous understandings and that the City's consent to the existence of reservation land within the city was not necessary in 1986. The City strongly contests this position.

The City will seek a declaratory judgment from the Court upholding the legal standing of the signed agreements. The City is confident that the Court will find that this action by the Band has no legal standing and will quickly uphold the agreement that exists today and that remains in place until 2036.

"The Band has taken a direction contrary to our understanding of the agreement and federal law. We would hope that the Band would choose to seek clarification from the Court rather than attempt to abruptly and unilaterally end the very foundation of their longstanding relationship with the City under these agreements," states Bob Maki, the City's legal counsel.

Over the past 25 years, these agreements have been thoroughly reviewed and approved by the Fond du Lac Band, the City of Duluth, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission and the Federal District Court for Minnesota.

"The City remains committed to the continuation of a respectful and successful joint venture with the Fond du Lac Band," said Mayor Don Ness. "Once the legal standing of the agreement is confirmed we hope to work with the Band towards a renewed success of the Casino in the middle of Duluth's downtown waterfront."

The Band expressed what both parties saw as mutual and shared interests in the very difficult days of the early 1980s in Duluth when, in the words of the Band in 1994 before Congress, "In 1984, representatives of the City and the Band came together to explore the possibility of creating a joint relationship that would benefit the interest of both parties."

Both the Band and the City have benefited from this joint venture over the past 25 years. This success would not have been possible without the agreement and cooperation of both parties.

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