

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members

My name is Lynn Lindow and I am a Supervisor for Forest Township in Northeast Becker County within the White Earth Indian Reservation.

I would like to address SF3557 regarding that the purchase of Tax-forfeited land be required to be offered to the tribal band before other parties.

Two concerns I have regarding this bill. The first is monies that come in to townships and counties that are used to maintain roads. Local governments receive PILT (payment in lieu of taxes) on these tax-forfeited lands. Many of the small townships in this area are largely dependent on this income to maintain the local access roads in order for landowners to access their property and for emergency vehicles to get to those in need. If these lands are purchased by the tribe, that PILT monies will be decreased. Tribal land is not taxed so local land owners will have to have their taxes raised in order to maintain roads.

The second concern is property access. Almost all access roads cross state and tax-forfeited land. All though these property owners have legal easements to access their property. Will all recorded easements established by property owners remain open? Before this bill is approved, the state needs to insure that all easements are durable. This bill does not guarantee these easements will be honored by the tribe?

SF3557 has similar issues that SF3480, transfer of state land to the White Earth tribe that has not come forward to this committee. SF 3480 was tabled last week to allow time to resolve these same issues before passing the bill.

Please vote No or Table SF3557 so that these issues can be resolved.

Thank you.
Lynn Lindow,
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