

## Tribal Concerns and Discussion Points

### North Dakota State and Tribal Relations Committee

October 16, 2013

Submitted by: Richard McCloud, Tribal Chairman, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

As elected leaders of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, it is our responsibility to examine and seek remedies for issues that adversely affect the safety and well-being of our tribal members as well those who may be visiting our reservation.

Today, I would like bring the dire state of our reservation road systems to the attention of the Tribal and State Relations Committee.

While all of our North Dakota Tribes face unique obstacles to improve our road systems to adequate and acceptable conditions, we share the common problem that our tribal shares of the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Road Maintenance funding is not sufficient to properly maintain and provide safe transportation conditions for our communities.

Transportation is an important part of almost everything we do to provide ourselves with the necessities of life. Roads provide tribes the opportunity for economic growth, self-determination, and employment.

We, the Turtle Mountain people, face the problem of updating a road system that contains many roads that have far outlived their expected lives. In 1976, The BIA constructed concrete roads throughout our reservation. In order to gain additional mileage, project administrators decided to narrow the paved road top from 24 to 22 feet wide. Today, those narrow concrete road tops are crumbling and coupled with high traffic volumes result in extremely dangerous road conditions. With the exception of a portion of BIA route 7, none of these routes have been updated to meet modern safety standards.

In this time of prosperity for the state of North Dakota, The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa is requesting state assistance to upgrade our Indian Reservation Road System.

Specifically we are seeking funding to reconstruct our most dangerous route, that being Jack Rabbit Road. Jack Rabbit Road contains portions of three BIA routes and is an arterial route that connects our Belcourt and Dunseith communities.

The Tribal Transportation Department has constructed a project summary booklet that includes engineer's estimates, construction alternatives, and a Cost Benefit Analysis among other items. This booklet will be mailed out to committee members for review.

I would like to thank the Committee for taking the time to hear and consider our request. If you have any questions or concerns you may address them to me or our Transportation Director, Ron Trottier.