

Boozhoo. Bimose Giniw indizhinikaaz. Muckwa indoodem. Miskwaagamiwi-Zaaga'iganing indoojibaa.

(My name is Bimose Giniw. I am of the Bear Clan. I am from Red Lake.)

My name is Sam Strong. I am Secretary of the Red Lake Nation, here on behalf of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians.

Co-Chairs Lee and Franson, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak. Red Lake is facing a severe housing crisis that cannot be addressed without your partnership.

A 2023 Wilder Research study found 627 people on the reservation are homeless, with 695 experiencing housing instability. That means 11.3% of our population is homeless, over 6,000% higher than Minnesota's statewide average of 0.18%. Nearly a quarter are parents with children. Put yourself in their shoes—sleeping outside, in a car, or in an abandoned house during the brutal northern Minnesota winters. That is the reality too many of our people endure.

We're ready to build homes. We're ready to provide shelter. But we can't—because our wastewater system, built in the 1960s and 1970s, is at full capacity. Our three sewage lagoons are overloaded and simply cannot support any new housing or business development.

This project is urgent. We need to invest in modern infrastructure to unlock housing, restore dignity, and create economic opportunity.

This project cannot wait—the time is now. Think of our children who are struggling.

Please help us give them hope.