

Thomas Barrett, Little Rock Representative

Little Rock Lagoon Project

Boozhoo Co-Charis, committee members, and legislators. My name is Thomas Barrett, I come from the Sturgeon Clan and I've been a Little Rock Community member since 1997. As the current Little Rock District Representative, I can attest to the need for this Water Waste Lagoon project. On the Red Lake reservation; we are the largest land based district, and also the lowest populated. Our district holds a unique opportunity for much needed housing expansion. The Red Lake Nation is the largest Tribal Nation in Minnesota and growing. The need for expansion is upon us and in order to do this; we need the proper infrastructure.

That is why a new wastewater treatment plant is the critical first step toward breaking this logjam. With modern wastewater capacity, we will finally be able to construct new homes and even attract businesses on our reservation. This plant will immediately allow us to provide safe housing for our people and will lay the groundwork for future economic development. It is not just a piece of infrastructure – it is the key that will unlock hope and opportunity for Red Lake's future.

The Current Little Rock community homes use individual septic tanks with drain fields for wastewater, these systems are closely spaced and are failing. The existing systems were installed in the 1970's. By constructing a Wastewater Lagoon in the Little Rock community alleviates the potential for possible health issues and safety concerns for the community. A new lagoon will serve the current 51 homes in a low income housing area and will allow for any future expansion in the community. This is a shovel ready project with all the required documents, plans, specifications, and environmental clearances in place.

The wastewater lagoon is one part of two projects, we are also working on installing the wastewater lines that will connect the homes to the lagoon and stub out for further expansion within the community. The current lagoon project is estimated at 3.3 million dollars and can begin as soon as funds are made available. The individual hook up project is designed and ready for construction with an estimated cost of 3.8 million that the band will be funding.

Honorable legislators, we respectfully ask for your help to make this happen. By funding this project, you will address an immediate humanitarian need and also invest in Red Lake's long-term growth and prosperity. You can help hundreds of people gain a safe home and empower an entire community to thrive. Please support our bonding request for the Little Rock wastewater lagoon – it is a lifeline for our people. Miigwech (thank you) for your time and compassion.