

GRAND RAPIDS CHAMBER

September 20, 2022

The Honorable Debra Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C., 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

I am writing to express the Grand Rapids Chamber's support for the Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians' petition for federal recognition and to urge the U.S. Department of the Interior to approve the tribe's request.

Approval of the Grand River Bands' petition has long been under consideration, as the tribe has been on the "active consideration list" with the Department since 2013. The tribe was in the final phase of becoming federally recognized when the process was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

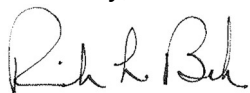
The Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians is a valuable part of the community, with deep roots and an amazing history in West Michigan. Its tribal members live and work in West Michigan, and the Grand River Bands is heavily involved in West Michigan communities, from working to restore the rapids in the Grand River, to playing a central role in community events that bring people together.

Federal recognition would allow the Grand River Bands to access resources only afforded to federally recognized tribes, such as tuition, health care and housing assistance. These key resources would benefit Grand River Bands members greatly and only come with federal recognition.

The tribe has support from lawmakers from both parties and the public. I am proud to add our support on behalf of the West Michigan business community and urge you to approve the Grand River Bands' petition for federal recognition.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rick Baker
President & CEO
Grand Rapids Chamber