

Owned Together, Grown Together

July 22, 2026

Senator Elissa Slotkin
Hart Senate Office Bldg. Ste 291
Washington, DC 20510

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As Co-President of the Grand Rapids Food Co-Op, I understand the importance of communities working together to expand opportunity, strengthen local economies, and ensure people have access to the resources they need. In that spirit, I write in support of S. 2160, the Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians Restoration Act of 2025.

Thank you for introducing this legislation to reaffirm federal recognition for the Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians. Congresswoman Hillary Scholten and Congressman John James have introduced companion legislation, H.R. 3255, with bipartisan support from Michigan's congressional delegation.

The Grand River Bands has a long and well-documented history in West Michigan. Between 1795 and 1855, tribal leaders signed five treaties reaffirming the Tribe's sovereignty and homelands. Yet the Grand River Bands remains the last treaty tribe east of the Mississippi River without federal recognition.

The Tribe began the federal recognition process in 1994 and completed its petition in 2000. More than two decades later, the process remains unresolved. During that time, generations of tribal members have been denied access to critical resources for education, housing, elder care, social services, and the exercise of treaty rights.

Federal recognition would also allow the Tribe to pursue economic development opportunities that could create good-paying jobs, support local businesses, and strengthen West Michigan.

For far too long, the Grand River Bands has been denied its rightful status and the resources needed to serve its people. I respectfully urge Congress to pass S. 2160 without further delay.

Sincerely,

Linda Jones
Co-President
Grand Rapids Food Co-op