WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
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June 20, 2008

The Honorable John Conyers
Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Ranking Minority Member
House Judiciary Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Don Young
Ranking Minority Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

via fax

RE: NAACP OPPOSITION TO H.R. 2176 AND H.R. 4115, LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO THE BAY MILLS AND SAULT STE. MARIE NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES OF MICHIGAN

Dear Chairman Conyers, Chairman Rahall, Congressman Smith and Congressman Young;

On behalf of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), our nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots civil rights organization, I urge you to oppose H.R. 2176, legislation pertaining to certain land requests by the Bay Mills Native American tribe and H.R. 4115, pertaining to the Sault Ste. Marie tribe. Both bills may be considered on the House floor as early as next week.

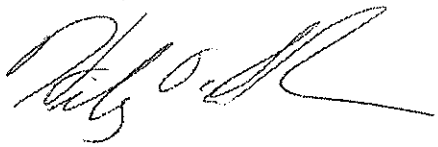
The NAACP has historically been in strong support of the sovereignty of Native American tribes across the United States, and we shall continue to support the rights of indigenous people. However, in this instance we join with most Native American tribes in Michigan as well more than 50 tribes from all across the Nation, in opposing this potentially problematic precedent-setting legislation. Both these bills raise serious questions regarding procedural fairness, due process and respect for the role of States, local governments as well as the voters in our country.

In 2004 the people of Michigan, more than 14% of whom are African American, voted in a state-wide referendum to strictly limit the expansion of casino gaming in Michigan. Under current Michigan law, any new gaming facility must be approved of by both a local and a state-wide vote. By circumventing these state

laws, both H.R. 2176 and H.R. 4115 would override the express wishes of Michigan voters.

Thank you in advance for your attention to the NAACP position. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at my office at (202) 463-2940.

Sincerely,



Hilary O. Shelton
Director