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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **KBIC Testifies Before U.S. House Natural Resources Committee in Support of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Land Claim Settlement Act**

**Baraga, MI** — The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community President Robert “RD” Curtis, Jr. testified this Wednesday before the U.S. House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indian & Insular Affairs in support of H.R. 411, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Land Claim Settlement Act. Championed in the House by Representative Jack Bergman, this legislation seeks to compensate the Tribe for the unconstitutional taking of treaty-protected reservation lands and confirm title for the current landowners.

“The Tribal Council and the whole Keweenaw Bay Indian Community appreciates Representative Bergman’s leadership and the House Natural Resources Committee for holding this important hearing,” said Keweenaw Bay Indian Community President Robert “RD” Curtis, Jr. “We have sought a fair and non-adversarial resolution to these longstanding claims, and we look forward to working with the Committee to advance this bill.”

“The Tribal Council and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community appreciate the efforts of the Michigan delegation, especially Representative Bergman and Representative Walberg, for their support during the Subcommittee hearing,” said Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Vice-President Everett Ekdahl, Jr. “After the United States admitted that our claims are valid, KBIC Tribal Council chose to pursue justice through cooperation, not unnecessary litigation, so we could acknowledge past wrongs while maintaining harmony with our community.”

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community worked closely with its neighbors in Baraga County, the Village of L’Anse, and the Village of Baraga, Governor Gretchen Whitmer, the Department of the Interior, and its U.S. Congressional Delegation to develop the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Land Claim Settlement Act. This legislation recognizes the uncompensated federal taking on lands guaranteed to the Community under its 1854 treaty and provides compensation to the Community for those takings. In return, it extinguishes all claims by the Community to those lands.

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The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community celebrates this important step forward and expresses appreciation to Representative Bergman and the House Natural Resources Committee for working to right this historic wrong. This legislation now awaits markup in the House Subcommittee, after which it may be advanced to the full House Natural Resources Committee and ultimately the U.S. House of Representatives. The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community looks forward to continuing its work with Congressman Bergman and other federal partners to ensure the passage of this legislation.

A companion bill in the U.S. Senate led by Senators Gray Peters and Elissa Slotkin passed the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in March of this year.

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#### **About Keweenaw Bay Indian Community:**

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) is a federally recognized Tribe and is signatory to the Treaties with the Chippewa of 1842 and 1854. Established under the Treaty of 1854, the primary land base of the KBIC is the L'Anse Indian Reservation. The L'Anse Indian Reservation consists of approximately 59,000 acres and services members within the boundaries of the reservation in Baraga County, as well as members in Marquette, Ontonagon, and Houghton counties. KBIC currently has over 3,500 enrolled members.

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