Joint statement of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and Illinois Farm Bureau on H.R. 5831 and S. 2796

October 4, 2023

Illinois Farm Bureau members and landowners in eastern Illinois may remember efforts about two decades ago by the Miami Tribe to lay claim to hundreds of thousands of acres of Illinois farmland under the 1805 Treaty of Grouseland. In recent years, the Miami's representatives approached Illinois Farm Bureau to write federal legislation that would resolve the tribe's two century-old claim in a way that forever holds private landowners harmless.

Under H.R. 5831, sponsored by Oklahoma Republican Tom Cole, and S. 2796, sponsored by Oklahoma Republican Markwayne Mullin, Congress would remove any cloud on title resulting from the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma's claim to 2.6 million acres of eastern Illinois farmland. Under the bill's provisions, the Tribe waives all claims to the land under any possible legal theory against Illinois landowners but may argue its claim against the United States before the United States Court of Federal Claims. If the Tribe prevailed in its claim against the federal government, the Court of Claims could provide only monetary damages.

"We are pleased to work with the Miami on this legislation. While IFB takes no position on the Tribe's monetary claims, we support passage of H.R. 5831 and S. 2796," said Illinois Farm Bureau President Richard Guebert, Jr.

"The Tribe is focused on a solution to the Grouseland Treaty claim that is fair to Illinois farmers. The IFB has been exceptional to work with toward this end," said Miami of Oklahoma Chief Doug Lankford.

Richard L. Guebert Jr.
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