

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE PRAIRIE ISLAND INDIAN COMMUNITY
EMERGENCY GAMING FACILITY AND FEE-TO-TRUST PROJECT

Notice is hereby given that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has released an Environmental Assessment (EA) dated June 2024 for the Prairie Island Indian Community (Tribe) Emergency Gaming Facility and Fee-to-Trust Project. The EA has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 United States Code [USC] §4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Guidelines for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and the BIA NEPA guidebook (59 Indian Affairs Manual 3-H), and assesses the environmental impacts that could result from the acquisition by the BIA of 419.8 acres (Project Site) into federal trust status for the benefit of the Tribe for gaming purposes (Proposed Action). Once in trust, the Tribe proposes to improve the Project Site for the potential future operation of an emergency gaming facility should a catastrophic event force the closure of the Tribe's existing Treasure Island Resort & Casino (Proposed Project).

The Project Site is located directly east of Highway 52 and is partially within unincorporated Olmsted County and partially within the City of Pine Island, Minnesota. The Project Site includes land on either side of White Pine Road SE, directly south of its intersection with White Bridge Road NW. Existing land uses of the Project site include cattle grazing and agriculture. Surrounding land uses include agriculture and rural residences with small commercial developments to the south.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to facilitate tribal self-sufficiency, self-determination, and economic development, thus satisfying both the Department of the Interior's (Department) land acquisition policy as articulated in the Department's trust land regulations at 25 CFR Part 151 and the principal goal of IGRA as articulated in 25 USC § 2701. The BIA serves as the Lead Agency for NEPA compliance and will use the EA to determine if the Proposed Action would result in significant adverse effects to the environment. Public comments will be considered by the BIA, and either a Finding of No Significant Impact will be prepared or additional environmental analysis will be conducted. After the NEPA process is complete, the BIA may issue a determination on the Proposed Action.

The 30-day public comment period for the EA will begin on July 15, 2024 and end on August 14, 2024. An online virtual public hearing is scheduled for July 31, 2024 from 5:30 pm Central Time until the final comment is heard. Instructions for participation in the public hearing are available online at <http://www.PIICcasinoEA.com>.

For additional information, please contact Scott Doig, Division of Environmental & Cultural Resources Management (DECRM) Branch Chief and Regional Environmental Scientist, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Midwest Regional Office, at 612.719.5337 or by email at scott.doig@bia.gov. Written comments should be emailed to scott.doig@bia.gov or mailed to the following address:

The EA is available for public review online at <http://www.PIICcasinoEA.com> and in hard copy at the Van Horn Public Library located at 115 3rd St SE Pine Island, MN 55963, telephone number 507.356.8558.