

### **Introduction – About Menominee & Oneida:**

(Introduce Yourself)

Beginning in 2021, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and the Oneida Nation partnered together to participate in the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project. Through this project, we are replacing USDA buffalo, ground beef, beef roast, and apples with Oneida Nation buffalo, ground beef, beef roast, and apples. We are also replacing USDA wild rice with wild rice from Spirit Lake and replacing USDA fish with fish from Red Cliff.

By participating in this demonstration project, we are:

- Expanding tribal sovereignty
- Providing better, more nutritious foods to our community
- Expanding cultural and historical knowledge through the use of traditional foods
- Building capacity amongst our tribal staff, farmers, indigenous vendors, food producers, and our government as well as educate the USDA on our food systems and the challenges our communities face with access to nutritious, locally-grown, and traditional foods.
- Providing a source of economic benefits to the tribes and tribal vendors
- Expanding Self Determination and hopefully Self Governance into the USDA.

### **How we want to see this Demonstration Project evolve:**

While we are happy to participate in this Demonstration Project, we believe more can be done to enhance tribal flexibility in FDPIR and USDA:

- We would like to see this Demonstration Project become permanent and expanded to include Self Governance authority. Although we appreciate the opportunity to determine what foods to buy and incorporate into the FDPIR food packages, we think tribal authority should go beyond this by providing tribes with recurring, base funding and the authority to redesign the program in a way that meets each tribe's unique needs and tribal priorities.
- This flexibility is especially important for FDPIR, because our local food products are so impacted by seasonality and weather. This demonstration project required us to predict specific food quantities months or years ahead of the actual growing season, which is challenging. For example, In May 2021, Wisconsin suffered unusual weather and experienced three hard frosts. This ended up damaging much of the apples in our region and the Orchard lost over half of their apple production in 2021. If we had Self-Governance authority, we would be able to handle unforeseen issues without having to obtain federal approval and all the administrative work that goes along with it to substitute products or make budget modifications.
- Increased flexibility would also allow us to respond to the unique needs and demands of our community. So far, we have received a lot of positive feedback from our clientele. Many of our customers have said how they are enjoying the quality of the foods being provided, especially the black angus beef that comes from the Oneida Nation Farm. One Elder customer said that she does not have to use much seasoning when preparing the meat because the quality is so much better. The beef and buffalo are in high demand and efforts

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are being made to provide more beef roasts for next year. Under Self-Governance, we would have been able to reallocate funds from other products, such as fish products, to the beef and buffalo products without further approval from the USDA. Under the current demonstration project, we had to make a modification of our food list in order to reallocate funds to meet the needs of our communities.

**Closing:**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective on the FDPIR Demonstration Project. We are eager to work with you to make this demonstration project permanent and expand Self-Governance in FDPIR and the USDA.

**Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Information Required From Nongovernmental Witnesses**

**House rules require nongovernmental witnesses to provide their resume or biographical sketch prior to testifying. If you do not have a resume or biographical sketch available, please complete this form.**

1. **Name:** Mr. Gary J Besaw
  
2. **Organization you represent:** **Menominee Tribal Department of Agriculture and Food Systems (DAFS), Menominee Food Distribution Program.**
  
3. **Please list any occupational, employment, or work-related experience you have which add to your qualification to provide testimony before the Committee: Director, DAFS and Menominee Tribal Food Distribution Program, FDPIR project recipient of 2018 Farm Bill FDPIR 638 Joint Oneida/Menominee Demonstration Project**  

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4. **Please list any special training, education, or professional experience you have which add to your qualifications to provide testimony before the Committee: Former Menominee Tribal Legislature Chairman, ViceChairman, Secretary, 15 years Menominee Tribal Legislature Standing Committees, Menominee Nation is a member of the Native Farm Bill Coalition, UW-Madison M.S. Education A.**  

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5. **If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list the capacity in which you are representing that organization, including any offices or elected positions you hold: Director, DAFS and Director, Menominee Tribal Food Distribution Program. Director of above two departments (DAFS) and Food Distribution Program.**  

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**PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM OR YOUR BIOGRAPHY TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.**

# Truth in Testimony Disclosure Form

In accordance with Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5)\* of the *Rules of the House of Representatives*, witnesses are asked to disclose the following information. Please complete this form electronically by filling in the provided blanks.

**Committee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subcommittee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hearing Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hearing** :

**Witness Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position/Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness Type:**  Governmental  Non-governmental

**Are you representing yourself or an organization?**  Self  Organization

**If you are representing an organization, please list what entity or entities you are representing:**

## **FOR WITNESSES APPEARING IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL CAPACITY**

**Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.**

**Are you a fiduciary—including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent—of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing? If so, please list the name of the organization(s) or entities.**

**Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) related to the hearing's subject matter that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.**

**Please list any contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government and related to the hearing's subject that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the amount and country of origin of each contract or payment.**

**Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.**

- I have attached a written statement of proposed testimony.
- I have attached my curriculum vitae or biography.

\* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5), of the U.S. House of Representatives provides:

(5)(A) Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof.

(B) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include— (i) a curriculum vitae; (ii) a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the past 36 months by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (iii) a disclosure of whether the witness is a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent) of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing.

(C) The disclosure referred to in subdivision (B)(iii) shall include— (i) the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (ii) the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter of the hearing originating with a foreign government.

(D) Such statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the privacy or security of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form 24 hours before the witness appears to the extent practicable, but not later than one day after the witness appears.