

and additional members of the Minnesota delegation – all Democrats – “stopped in” for brief periods during the meeting.¹⁵⁴

The congressmen involved in the Feb. 8 meeting likely understood the importance that the tribes placed on this meeting with top Interior officials. In a memorandum prepared shortly beforehand, Oberstar staff member Waylon Peterson described the meeting as “**a very important meeting for the tribes.**”¹⁵⁵ (Emphasis in original.) Peterson told investigators there were two purposes to the meeting: (1) to get the comment period extended; and (2) to get the application “killed.”¹⁵⁶ Peterson’s memo to Oberstar listed a series of points to be made in the meeting: deficient consultation by BIA with nearby tribes in Minnesota, a flawed FONSI, and the notion that the “Wisconsin [application] supporters, including Tommy Thompson, are Republicans; why should the Clinton Administration help them?”

a. The “Strategy” Meeting

The tribal opponent representatives recall that they met in a “strategy” meeting with members of the Minnesota delegation for about 40 minutes, immediately before the Interior officials arrived. Opponent attendees included: John McCarthy, Frank Ducheneaux and Myron Ellis on behalf of MIGA; Larry Kitto and Lewis Taylor on behalf of the St. Croix; Kurt BlueDog, Stanley Crooks and Ginny Boylan on behalf of the Shakopee; and Melanie Benjamin on behalf of the Mille Lacs. Oberstar and Vento hosted the meeting, along with their staffers, including Waylon Peterson.

¹⁵⁴McCarthy G.J. Test., Feb. 24, 1999, at 37-38.

¹⁵⁵Memorandum from Waylon Peterson to James Oberstar, Feb. 6, 1995.

¹⁵⁶OIC Interview of Waylon Peterson, Oct. 21, 1998, at 3.