

White Earth Tribe Proposes Metro Casino to Fund New Stadium

By [John A. Knapp](#) on February 16, 2012

Today the White Earth Tribe announced a proposed partnership with the state to construct a casino in the Metro area to fund a new Vikings stadium. The casino would be operated in equal partnership with the State of Minnesota and revenues would be split 50-50 between the Tribe and the State.

Rep Kent Eken (DFL-Twin Valley), the chief author of HF 2197, said this provides broad based benefits for not only the Vikings and the White Earth Tribe, but for all of Minnesota. A new casino is estimated to create 2,500 temporary construction jobs and 2,000 year-round, permanent positions. Eken said this is the least objectionable Vikings Stadium bill and is likely to gain the most traction.

Erma Vizenor, Chairwoman of the White Earth Tribe, said they represent 40 percent of native people in the state. White Earth has not discussed their plan with other tribes or considered collaboration with other Minnesota tribes. She said they have the financing and are working out the details regarding payment for the startup costs. The White Earth Tribe owns and operates the Shooting Star Casino and Hotel near Itasca State Park in Northern Minnesota.

Cory Merrifield, founder of Save the Vikes, said this is a great approach to funding a new stadium for the Vikings. "White Earth is the first tribe to come forward and be willing to renegotiate the compacts for revenue sharing," he said. Mr. Merrifield asked the Legislature to stop listening to the special interests and listen to the collective voice of the people. Vizenor said they have not discussed the proposal with the Vikings but have kept the team informed.

Vizenor said a more detailed financial analysis will be available next month. There is currently no companion to the bill in the Senate though Eken said he did not think it would be difficult to garner broad support for the legislation.