

**SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS
ELECTION COMMISSION**

Complaint: Linda Hammonds

March 26, 2026

BACKGROUND

On March 17, 2026, the Election Commission received a complaint filed by Unit I Candidate Betty Freiheit. In that complaint submitted, Ms. Freiheit alleges that Linda Hammond violated 10.113 on March 14, 2026, at approximately 3 pm, by campaigning on Tribally owned property. The alleged incident occurred at the Niigaanagiizhik Traditional Ceremonial Building in Sault Ste. Marie. During this time, the allegation is that there was a confrontation in the parking lot between Ms. Freiheit and Ms. Hammond, during which Ms. Hammond yelled in a clear, loud voice, with direct eye contact with Ms. Freiheit approximately 20 feet away: "If you think you're going to win this election, you're F**king crazy."

The complaint requested the following relief:

1. That the actions of Linda Hammond be referred by the Election Commission to the Sault Tribe Law Enforcement to investigate Election Fraud under 71.1103.

ANALYSIS

The Election Commission requested the Election Commission Attorney pursuant to 10.121(2) on whether the allegations in the contest constitute a violation of this Code. The Election Commission Attorney presented his findings to the Election Commission during the March 26, 2026, meeting.

The relevant code sections to this contest are 10.103, 10.113, 10.120, and 10.121.

10.103(4) Campaigning shall mean all efforts designed to influence members to support or reject a particular Candidate, including, without limitation, advertising, rallying, public speaking, or other communications with Members.

10.113(2) No campaigning shall take place in any tribal offices, tribal enterprises, or majority owned subsidiaries, tribally owned property, or events or functions, or those areas reasonably required as access to any of the foregoing locations except as allowed in Subsection (5) (posting of a sign on a public bulletin board) or (6) (signs on housing property with owner/tenant's permission).

10.120(1) All complaints must be submitted based on first-hand knowledge of an alleged violation.

10.121(3) The Election Commission, establishing two categories of Complaints: Administrative Complaints and Campaign Complaints.

a. Administrative Complaints: shall mean any type of action that is related to filing paperwork with the Election Commission. These types of Complaints can be initiated administratively by a majority vote of the Election Commission outside of the complaints/contest process. Examples of these types of Complaints include missed report filing deadline or failed to place endorsement on an advertisement. The Election Commission shall make the following types of decisions on these types of Complaints:

i. Dismiss the Complaint in writing as being without merit, if a Complaint is based on second-hand knowledge, it shall be dismissed as being without merit; or

ii. Issue a notice pursuant to the published Sanctions Schedule.

b. Campaign Complaints: shall mean any type of violation related to campaigning. These types of Complaints can only be initiated by members or candidates through the complaint process. The Election Commission shall make the following types of decisions on these types of Complaints:

i. Dismiss the Complaint in writing as being without merit, if a Complaint is based on second-hand knowledge, it shall be dismissed as being without merit; or

ii. Convene a hearing on the matter and render a written decision pursuant to subsection (5) of this section.

With the complaint alleging a campaign violation, it will be treated as a Campaign Complaint received by the Election Commission.

The complaint submitted by Ms. Freiheit is based on a situation she witnessed firsthand, meeting the requirements of 10.120(1). The Niigaanagiizhik Traditional Ceremonial Building in Sault Ste. Marie is located on property owned by the Tribe.

The question for the Election Commission to decide on this matter is whether the allegation that Ms. Hammond yelled in a clear, loud voice, with direct eye contact with Ms. Freiheit approximately 20 feet away: "If you think you're going to win this election, you're F**king crazy." meets the definition of campaigning under 10.103(4).

The Election Commission does not believe the statement made by Ms. Hammond directly to Ms. Freiheit was intended to influence a member to support or reject a candidate, and that it was not campaigning. These statements would not meet the definition of Election

Fraud under 71.1103. It is not the role of the Election Commission to weigh on the merits of any other possible violations of Chapter 71 that may have occurred during this altercation.

FINDINGS

The Election Commission makes the following findings:

1. The statements made by Linda Hammonds do not constitute campaigning under the definition of 10.103(4) and would not be a violation of 10.113.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED, that the Election Commission makes the determination pursuant to 10.121(3)(b)(i) that the complaint filed by Ms. Freiheit is without merit, and is dismissed.



Election Commission Vice-Chairperson

March 26, 2026

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

This decision may be appealed to the Tribal Court of Appeals by filing a notice of appeal within five days of receipt of this decision. That appeal shall be governed by Tribal Code Chapter 82 Subchapter II: Appeals from the Election Committee. A notice of appeal must be filed within five (5) business days of the Appellant receiving this order and the publication of this order.