

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

Contest: Jennifer Tyson-McLeod

March 12, 2026

BACKGROUND

On March 6, 2026, the Election Commission received a contest filed by Unit One Director Aaron Payment. In his contest per Tribal Code Chapter 10.119, Mr. Payment alleges that Unit One Candidate Jennifer Tyson-McLeod failed to transmit her original nominating petitions to run for office by the March 4, 2026, deadline. Mr. Payment did not provide any evidence to support the contest he filed. The contest appears to be based solely on the fact that the Sugar Island Ferry shut down multiple times during the week, leading up to the Nominating Petitions deadline.

The contest requested the following relief:

1. That Jennifer Tyson-McLeod be deemed ineligible to run for office in Unit One.

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 12, 2026, meeting.

The relevant code sections for this contest are 10.112 and 10.121.

10.112(8) All completed nomination petitions must be received by the Designated Representative at the Designated Office forty-nine (49) days after the posting of the Notice of Election.

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 contest here alleging that the Nominating Petitions were not filed by the deadline, the Election Commission is treating this as an Administrative Complaint under 10.121. since it concerns paperwork filed with the Election Commission to make someone eligible for nomination to office.

For the 2026 Election, the Notice of Election was posted on January 14, 2026, and forty-nine days from that date is March 4, 2026.

The Designated Office for Unit One is the Tribal Court, which stamps all election documents with the date and time of their filing with the Designated Office. The stamp on the nominating petitions submitted by Ms. Tyson-McLeod is March 2nd at 2:30 PM. An Electronic Copy of the nominating petitions was emailed from the Tribal Court to the Elections Email on March 2nd at 2:57 PM. The hard copy was sent to the admin building via Inter Office mail.

The Election Commission's role is to conduct Tribal Elections and uphold their integrity. To file a contest with zero evidence or knowledge to support your allegations with the Election Commission is the equivalent of someone filing a false police report, and it speaks to a person's character. Under Tribal Code 71.1103(1)(b) and (i), a person commits the offense of election fraud if the person: (b) acts to compromise the integrity of the election, or attempts to do so by falsifying any documents, including documents filed with the Tribal Election Commission or Board of directors or (i) filed a false report required by Tribal Code 10.112.

FINDINGS

The Election Commission makes the following findings:

1. Based on the contest filed, Jennifer Tyson-McLeod filed all her Nominating Petitions with the Unit One Designated Office prior to the March 4th deadline to submit them and is eligible to run for office in Unit One.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED, that the Election Commission makes the determination pursuant to 10.121(3)(a)(i) that the contest filed by Mr. Payment is without merit, and is dismissed.



Election Commission Vice-Chairperson

March 12, 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.