

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sault Tribe lauds Line 5 easement decision

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. — Today, Sault Tribe leadership applauded the announcement by Michigan's Governor Whitmer that the state bottomlands easement for the Line 5 twin crude oil pipelines has been revoked, effective immediately.

“The Sault Tribe is enormously relieved that this ongoing threat to the health of the waters of Lake Michigan is ending,” Sault Tribe chairperson Aaron Payment said. “We have been asking the state of Michigan to take action on this matter for many years and today is a day to celebrate.”

The Sault Tribe first called on “any government” to take the necessary action to stop the flow of oil through Line 5 in a resolution dated February 2015. Since then, the tribe has pursued this through all legal channels, in hearing rooms and meeting rooms as well as at information gatherings, demonstrations and peaceful protests. Often led by women, these protests have informed the public about the importance of tribal lifeways and culture and the tribe's values of respect for water, land and other beings.

“In our culture, women bear the responsibility for protecting the water, with men's assistance,” Hessel area tribal board representative Catherine Hollowell said. “Our tribal fishing grounds are under direct threat of an imminent catastrophe from these aging pipes.”

Payment said, “Our tribal ogitchidaakwe (warrior women) have been persistent voices for stopping the oil before a disaster strikes, especially those on our tribal board of directors – both those currently seated and those who previously served. They've led the way to shut down Line 5. Therefore, it is particularly satisfying that the women leading the state of Michigan have taken this responsibility seriously and taken this action today.”

The Sault Tribe congratulates Governor Whitmer, Attorney General Nessel and the rest of the Michigan government for this historic and wise action, and looks forward to the day, 180 days from now, when we no longer have to worry about a breach in those pipes.

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