

MEDIA RELEASE

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SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich.

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Tribe's emergency plan in line with Governor Whitmer's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" executive order

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. — Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed a "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order directing all Michigan businesses and operations to suspend in-person operations that are not necessary to sustain or protect life.

The governor's order is effective March 24 for at least the next three weeks, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians lauds Governor Whitmer's actions, which will strengthen efforts to assure the health and safety of tribal members and the community. The tribe has already put in place a plan that fits into the state's executive order. The tribal Board of Directors declared a state of emergency March 17 and gave the tribe's Executive Director, Casino CEO and EDC Director temporary powers to "modify policies or procedures, order closures, cancel or schedule events, implement programs, and take all other appropriate steps that are deemed essential to the protection of the public."

On behalf of the Sault Tribe Board of Directors, Chairperson Aaron Payment said, "Tribal lands are not subject to state executive orders. However, where it makes sense, we support voluntary compliance to keep our tribal members safe."

Sault Tribe governmental offices and casinos closed to the public March 23, retaining only essential core personnel and paying all employees for their regularly scheduled hours. The tribe's health clinics put restrictions in place limiting access to protect patients and staff. Tribal EDC closed property management to the public and put safety precautions in place for retail businesses. All Housing Authority offices are closed to the public but will continue to provide all essential and emergency services.

Sault Tribe advises members and employees to stay in their homes unless required to work in the office as essential personnel, as directed by the governor's executive order, unless, "engaged in an outdoor activity, or performing tasks necessary to the health and safety of themselves or their family, like going to the hospital or grocery store." Whitmer's order also calls for social distancing measures, including remaining at least 6 feet from people from outside the individual's household.

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