

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Sault Tribe responds to false and misleading MUCC release**

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. — On June 24, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians asked the court in *United States v. Michigan* for a 90-day extension of the 2000 Consent Decree, as written, in order to allow the parties more time to negotiate a new decree. The Sault Tribe also asked that the court remove provisions from the 2000 Decree regarding tribal exclusive zones — areas where all tribes have rights to fish, but where the 2000 Consent Decree only allows one or two tribes to fish — if the court felt an extension beyond 90 days was warranted.

Unfortunately, on July 16, 2020, the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) issued a false and misleading press release about the Sault Tribe's court filing. The Sault Tribe is issuing this statement to correct the harmful rhetoric and untrue allegations in that release.

Contrary to the assertions in MUCC's press release, titled "Court filing could end Great Lakes fishing as we know it," the Sault Tribe is not asking to change any other provision in the Decree during this extension. This means that gear restrictions and all other restrictions regarding tribal fishing in the 2000 Decree will remain in force during the extension. To provide a simple example, if under the current Decree the state gets 60 fish and a particular tribe gets 40 fish in an area, the Sault Tribe's request is that as of Nov. 6, 2020, the five tribes who share treaty fishing rights will *share* the 40 fish; the state's 60 fish will be *unaffected*. And, in areas where tribes get zero fish due to closures or other restrictions, tribes would continue getting zero fish under the extended Decree. Likewise, gear restrictions would remain in place.

MUCC's press release is rife with patently false assertions, including assertions that the Sault Tribe "seek[s] 100 percent of the resource with no limitations on gear," that "the Sault Tribe now wants to fish in Lake Michigan from the mouth of the Grand River to the Straits of Mackinac and to the Bays de Noc," and that if the court grants the Sault Tribe's motion, "tribal fishers could start fishing in all of the treaty waters on November 8." MUCC then asks for donations.

MUCC is fear mongering and spreading disinformation to raise funds. The Sault Tribe is happy to respond to any and all questions regarding MUCC's press release and the motion for extension; please contact Tribal Chairperson Aaron Payment at 906-635-6050 if you have questions.

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