



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Judi Henckel 269.569.6843**

Date: July 28, 2017

Attribute the following statement to Jamie Stuck, Chairperson, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi:

**NOTTAWASEPPI HURON BAND OF POTAWATOMI APPLAUDS U.S. INTERIOR DEPARTMENT  
DECISION REJECTING OFF-RESERVATION CASINO IN LANSING AND ROMULUS**

The Interior Department's decision rejecting the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe's efforts to establish reservations for the purpose of building casinos more than 300 miles away from their homelands was the right one for Michigan citizens. For the past five years, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe has been arguing that the Michigan Indian Land Claims Settlement Act mandated the federal agency to take any lands anywhere in the state into trust status for the tribe. Such an argument was not only a threat to the current system of tribal gaming in the state but also to the longstanding expectations of local municipalities of where tribal reservations may be located.

The Interior Department's decision reaffirms what the drafters of the original legislation have been saying all along, that Congress never intended to allow any tribe to use the law to shop for reservations throughout the state or to acquire land for gaming purposes.

For five years, the federal government and local governments of Lansing and Romulus have expended resources on this matter. We have expended resources to fight this effort because we believe in protecting the current system of tribal gaming and complying with the basic principle that tribes should stay within their historic aboriginal territories when acquiring lands into trust status. What the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe was trying to do would have set bad precedent for all tribes in Michigan.

In addition, the Sault Tribe's proposed off-reservation casinos would violate the Michigan Tribal-State gaming compacts. One of the gaming compact provisions requires tribes to obtain written agreements amongst all the state's tribes in order to pursue off-reservation casinos. The Sault Tribe has never attempted to address this reasonable provision.

We appreciate the efforts of the Interior Department to consider all sides of the matter and evaluate the evidence before them. We hope that this concludes the efforts of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe to develop casinos in lower Michigan and hope that any future efforts by them focus on their homelands in the Upper Peninsula.

For more information, please contact Jim Nye at 269.598.4248.

###

About The Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi

There are nearly 1,400 NHBP Tribal Members. NHBP's primary Indian Health and Bureau of Indians Affairs Service Area covers members in Allegan, Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, Kent and Ottawa counties. The Tribe's administrative office is located at the Pine Creek Indian Reservation in Athens Township, with a satellite office in Grand Rapids, Michigan to better serve Members. For more information visit: [www.nhbpi.com](http://www.nhbpi.com)