

EPA approves KBIC TAS application for water quality standards program

April 28, 2020

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) is very excited to announce that on April 21, 2020, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed KBIC's approved application for Treatment as a State (TAS) status for Water Quality under §518(e) of the [Clean Water Act](#) (CWA). KBIC is the first tribe in Michigan to achieve TAS regulatory authority for water quality. TAS permits KBIC to administer a water quality standards (WQS) program for KBIC's L'Anse Indian Reservation under CWA §303 and the certification program under CWA §401.

Now that the TAS application has been approved, the KBIC will proceed with the next steps towards administering its WQS program. First, KBIC continues its development of water quality standards while working closely with the EPA and the State of Michigan. Once KBIC and EPA have determined standards that can be reasonably attained, a public hearing will take place, at which time, the public will have the opportunity to provide comments. The EPA will then have 60-days to approve, or 90-days to disapprove, of KBIC's Water Quality Standards program.

The EPA has long encouraged and assisted American Indian tribes to create and administer locally-relevant environmental programs. The EPA has long encouraged and assisted American Indian tribes to create and administer locally-relevant environmental programs. Kurt Thiede, EPA Region 5 Regional Administrator provided the following in response to the KBIC TAS approval, "I am pleased to recognize the Tribe's authority to protect rivers and streams on the L'Anse reservation and to safeguard the health and heritage of its community and natural resources,"

Following TAS approval, KBIC President Swartz stated, "With honoring our first treaty with all orders of creation which include our obligations and connections to the natural environment, it is imperative that we take the next steps in exercising our sovereignty. The KBIC is excited to begin working on the development of water quality standards that will take into account the well-being of our local community. By obtaining Treatment as a Sovereign, we will continue building relationships with our local, state and federal partners in protecting our water resources here on the KBIC L'Anse Reservation."

For more about the KBIC WQS program and its process on achieving KBIC TAS for water, please contact Stephanie Cree at scree@kbic-nsn.gov or visit our story on the Natural Resources Department website at <http://nrd.kbic-nsn.gov/>.