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Under Pressure from Conservation Community, Michigan DNR Removes Hartwick Pines from Today's Land Lease Auction

ANN ARBOR --- Responding to pressure from the **Michigan League of Conservation Voters** (LCV) and other voices in the conservation community, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) removed Hartwick Pines State Park from the list of available parcels for oil and gas development at today's public land lease auction.

"There are places in Michigan that must be kept off-limits to oil and gas drilling and we applaud the DNR for removing Hartwick Pines from the auction block," said **Jack Schmitt**, Deputy Director for Michigan LCV. "The DNR heard from thousands of Michigan LCV members who wanted to see the park's white pines and wooded acres protected for generations to come, and today, they made the right decision."

More than 3,000 Michigan LCV members from across Michigan submitted public comments to the DNR, urging the agency to protect Hartwick Pines State Park from oil and gas activity. Hartwick Pines is home to the largest stand of virgin white pine forest in the Lower Peninsula; within those 49 acres are pines that are nearly 400 years old and that reach more than 150 feet tall. The park was donated to the state in 1927 as an emblem of conservation.

"Hartwick Pines is a jewel of our state park system and opening it up to oil and gas speculators would mean auctioning off a slice of Pure Michigan," said **Lisa Wozniak**, Executive Director for Michigan LCV. "I am so proud of our thousands of members across the state for holding decision makers accountable for protecting public land that has been purposefully set aside for nearly a century for generations of Michiganders to enjoy. The Michigan League of Conservation Voters will continue to defend Michigan's public land and ensure it is here for everyone to enjoy the great outdoors."

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Michigan League of Conservation Voters is Michigan's non-partisan political voice for land, air and water. Visit our website: <http://www.michiganlcv.org>.