

Statement from The Northern Michigan University Foundation to accompany the official letter sent from Melvin B. Hollowell (Miller Law Firm) on August 17, 2022
Issued on August 17, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Today The Northern Michigan University Foundation's legal counsel delivered a detailed response to State Representative Sara Cambensy's July 28 letter to The Honorable Dana Nessel, Attorney General of the State of Michigan. Following an in-depth review of Representative Cambensy's many false and baseless claims, as well as factual corrections made by the City of Marquette, Northern Michigan University Board of Trustees, and others, the Foundation determined it was important and necessary to provide an accurate record of the growing public-private partnership that it has led to facilitate the necessary resources and relationships required to prepare the former hospital site adjacent to NMU's campus for redevelopment, as well as to invite Attorney General Nessel to discuss any questions or points of clarification. A copy of the letter is being made available to the public.

Consistent with its mission to establish and foster relationships to generate resources that benefit Northern Michigan University, the NMU Foundation stands by the work done to date, which is presently in the final stages of realizing a productive and transformational outcome that many thought was impossible. The work by the NMU Foundation and this public-private partnership is poised to facilitate the demolition of 23-acres of functionally obsolete and blighted buildings at the former hospital site, which will enable one of the largest community development opportunities in the Upper Peninsula. These efforts have been supported by the City of Marquette, the Marquette Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the Michigan Legislature, and members of the Marquette community, as evidenced by public forums held earlier this year.

Along with other community members and key institutions, the Foundation is bewildered and dismayed by Representative Cambensy's misguided and reckless action. Her letter has caused a significant distraction during the critical stage of finalizing this transformational project. If it is not realized, it would come at the expense of the Marquette Community, NMU, taxpayers, and the community whom she serves. While we are disappointed that Representative Cambensy did not reach out to the NMU Foundation or any other parties to discuss the questions presented in her letter, we continue to offer an open door policy to directly discuss our collective efforts. We hope that this response provides additional clarity as well as the opportunity to discuss further any questions that the Attorney General may have while enabling the Foundation and its partners to continue focusing on pressing critical milestones to achieve an outcome that benefits Marquette, NMU, and the community at large.