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City of Duluth - Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Mayor Larson Issues Statement in Response to Explosion at Husky Energy

BY: Pakou Ly, Communications Office

Mayor Larson Issues Statement in Response to Explosion at Husky Energy

[Duluth, MN] - Duluth Mayor Emily Larson is issuing the following statement in response to last week's explosion at the Husky Energy refinery plant:

"We call ourselves the Twin Ports for a reason. When something significant happens on one side of the bridge, we feel it on the other.

I consider last week's explosion at the Husky oil refinery as a clear call to action. While it was certainly a traumatic event for refinery workers and a terrifying experience for residents on both sides of the bridge, it could have been much worse. We are collectively thankful for the emergency responders on both sides of the bridge for doing what they do best.

Currently, Husky operates a refinery within a population district of well over 130,000 people. We welcome their investment in our economies and the good paying jobs this work provides. However, choosing the known risks of hydrogen fluoride is not something that is in keeping with the premise of being a good corporate partner. It elevates danger to our environment and our people.

As it relates to the health and community risks of hydrogen fluoride, Husky has been provided with a free pass to reconsider their position for its use, and explore safer alternatives. Today I am calling on Husky to publicly commit to eliminating hydrogen fluoride from their oil refining process. In so doing, I am supporting Superior Mayor Jim Paine in his efforts to achieve the same.

As we stood side by side last week in support of clear and stable disaster response, I stand beside Mayor Paine in wanting more and better for our communities. There are other means to enable refining, and Husky has the capacity to choose new systems that maintain product integrity while protecting the health of their workers and decreasing risk to the families and loved ones in the Twin Ports.

It is horrifying to consider what could have happened. Let's commit ourselves to doing better."

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