



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN SAYS FEDERAL HOUSING ANNOUNCEMENT INADEQUATE FOR REMOTE COMMUNITIES

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose acknowledges the Government of Canada's announcement to improve on-reserve housing for Aboriginal Canadians, however the plan doesn't take into account the unique territory of Nishnawbe Aski and similar remote locations.

"For a housing initiative to be effective, it needs to reflect the reality of the environment," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose who's responsible for the housing portfolio at NAN – a political organization representing 49 First Nation communities across two-thirds of Ontario. "The socio-economic conditions in NAN territory have been compared to Third World. Many of these communities have inadequate water and sewer systems, let alone the economy to support a housing market."

Waboose's comments follow an announcement made Friday by Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Jim Prentice where he outlined a \$300 million plan for a First Nations Market Housing Fund that will allow on-reserve First Nation members a better chance at owning their own home.

"There needs to be a greater emphasis on the social component of housing," said Waboose adding that housing on-reserve is 80% social and 20% market-based, whereas the figures are reversed in cities or urban centres. "We can't have a sustainable housing market when we don't have the economy or infrastructure to back it up."

Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory (James Bay Treaty 9 and Ontario portion of Treaty 5) covers two-thirds of Ontario. 32 of NAN's 49 communities are fly-in only.

"Friday's announced housing plan is an urban-based initiative designed for First Nation communities located in or near cities," said Waboose, citing the pilot project which is being tested at the Kamloops Indian Band in BC. "We need a housing plan that acknowledges the remoteness of our communities. \$300 million sounds like a big number, but by the time it reaches the community level it works out to be about \$40,000 to build one home, including transportation costs."

A 2002 housing report cites NAN as requiring 5000 units. It's expected this number has increased since.

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