Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Thursday May 29, 2008 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN PLEASED WITH RELEASE OF KI LEADERSHIP, ENCOURAGES DISCUSSION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND FIRST NATION

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy is pleased by the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal yesterday for the immediate release of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) leadership and sees the decision as an opportunity for dialogue.

"It is the responsibility of all parities – the Ontario, Canada and First Nation Governments - to ensure that there is meaningful dialogue and resolve to avoid future incarceration of First Nation Leadership across Ontario. It is crucial that this window of opportunity be taken," said Beardy.

The May 28 decision at Osgood Hall in Toronto by Justices Marc Rosenberg, Kathryn Feldman and James MacPherson reduced the sentence to time served for KI Chief Donny Morris, Deputy Chief Jack McKay, head councillor Cecilia Begg, councillors Sam McKay, Darryl Sainnawap, and band member Bruce Sakakeep.

"Now it is time for Ontario to stop hiding behind policies and come to us in good faith so that we can begin to negotiate," said KI councillor and spokesperson McKay, "KI should have an equal opportunity to be heard and have our concerns taken into consideration before any decision is made concerning our territory."

The KI leadership were sentenced to six months in jail March 17 for civil contempt of court after disobeying a court order allowing junior mining exploration company Platinex Inc. to access KI traditional territory. Litigation between KI, Platinex Inc., and the Government of Ontario has been ongoing since Platinex sued the remote First Nation community for $10 billion after they were told to vacate KI traditional land February 2006.

Ardoch Algonquin First Nation (AAFN) negotiator Robert Lovelace also had his appeal yesterday and was released with a reduced sentence to time served. Lovelace was sentenced Feb. 19, 2008 to six months in jail and fined $25,000 for his participation in a peaceful protest over uranium exploration on Algonquin traditional territory (eastern Ontario). AAFN held a peaceful protest camp at a proposed exploration site at Robertsville after a court-ordered consultation period with uranium mining company Frontenac Ventures Corp. expired Jan. 28, 2008.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario.

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