



**Nishnawbe Aski Nation**  
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# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## NAN DISAPPOINTED ONTARIO WON'T FUND LAW SCHOOL WITH FOCUS ON ABORIGINAL LAW

**THUNDER BAY, ON:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy and NAN Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose are disappointed with the Government of Ontario's position that it will not fund any new law schools, including Lakehead University's proposal for a program in Northwestern Ontario with a focus on Aboriginal law.

"We are very disappointed by the decision of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as we have worked closely with Lakehead University for the creation and accreditation of a law school in the North," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "Everyone jokes that there are already enough lawyers, but in fact there is a severe shortage of lawyers skilled in Aboriginal law and who practice in northern communities."

Since 2005, Nishnawbe Aski Nation has partnered with Lakehead University to develop a curriculum that will address the unique needs of northern communities, including a focus on small and rural practices and a focus on Aboriginal law.

"We see this law school as an important investment in the future of our people, as it will encourage First Nations youth to pursue careers that will enable our people to deal more effectively in business, resource development and will improve our government-to-government relations as we move towards greater self-sufficiency and self-reliance," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose, who represents NAN on Lakehead's law school initiative. "We recognize that education is a key to our success, and we will continue to support Lakehead University's efforts to establish a law school."

Lakehead University has submitted a proposal to the Canadian Federation of Law Schools, including letters of support from law firms and individuals from across the province and across the country.

"We plan to continue to move forward with this proposal as we see this as a relevant and much-needed program," said Dr. Fred Gilbert, Lakehead University president and vice-chancellor. "We will pursue this initiative with our partners to ensure that at some point a law school is successfully established."

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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