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NEWS RELEASE

Thursday September 18, 2008 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN SHOCKED BY McGUNITY CABINET SHUFFLE

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy was shocked and disappointed to learn that Aboriginal Affairs Minister Michael Bryant has been moved from his portfolio as news leaked of Ontario Premier Dalton McGunity's cabinet shuffle Thursday.

"I was shocked to hear about the cabinet shuffle this morning, especially since we had a meeting with Minister Bryant Wednesday and were given no indication that a change was coming," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "This will require a strenuous rebuilding of our relationship with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Government of Ontario."

Michael Bryant was appointed minister of the revamped Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs on October 30, 2007. He will be replaced by current Labour Minister Brad Duguid.

"I attended Minister Bryant's swearing-in ceremony at Queen's Park, and since then we have worked hard to build a new relationship with the Government of Ontario," said Beardy. "By shuffling his cabinet, the Premier is forcing First Nations across Ontario to start all over again to build relationships with a new minster. This could potentially stall all of the good work that has gone into bilateral discussions."

NAN Chiefs have set priorities on creating resource revenue sharing legislation, First Nation-led land use planning, revising the Ontario Mining Act to include Supreme Court decisions based on consultation and accommodation, building a First Nation approach to parks, and overhauling the approach to licensing and permits in NAN territory.

"Minister Duguid is touted as having been an advocate for affordable housing, emergency services and crime prevention, and I sincerely hope that he is willing to bring this experience to help us solve the problems faced by First Nations communities in Nishnawbe Aski and across the province," said Beardy.

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

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