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NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday November 19, 2008 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN URGES GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO WORK WITH FIRST NATIONS TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMY

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy is urging the Government of Canada to work with First Nations to strengthen the Canadian economy after Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, delivered the Government's Speech from the Throne today.

"The downturn in the economy during this global economic crisis gives us a window of opportunity to work together to develop the capacity of NAN First Nations so we can build and enhance partnerships with resource industries such as mining and forestry that will allow us to share in share in economic opportunities in the future," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "The quality of life for First Nations is well below the mainstream, and the best way to resolve this is to take advantage of this economic slowdown and strengthen the ability of our communities to take advantage of opportunities that will arise as the economy recovers."

Major issues facing NAN communities include the high cost of living, high rates of unemployment, low educational outcomes, poor policing services, a housing and infrastructure crisis and a lack of access to quality health care.

Beardy was disappointed that no firm commitments were made in the throne speech to address these issues, but said NAN is ready to move forward with government-to-government relationships that will lay the foundation for a strong, healthy, and prosperous future for all Canadians.

"First Nations must be included in the recovery of the Canadian economy, and it is imperative that the glaring disparity between the standard of living in NAN communities and the rest of Canada is addressed," said Beardy. "We are hopeful we can make progress with the Government of Canada to implement rights for First Nations as guaranteed under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution."

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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