



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN UPSET OVER MTO'S PLANNED BRIDGE CLOSURES

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy is urging the Ministry of Transportation to rethink its planned closure of three bridges connecting 16 remote communities within the NAN territory to the south through the winter road network.

“While I agree with the ministry’s goal of improving the safety and reliability of the bridges, I do not think it should be at the expense of the First Nations who rely so heavily on the winter roads,” said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy. “Out of 52 weeks of the year, why does the Government of Ontario select two of the six weeks we use the winter roads to work on the bridges? Almost one-third of NAN’s communities will lose access to benefits from the winter road season for one-third of the time the season is open – and this during a year when our communities are experiencing an access to fuel crisis.”

The affected bridges are:

- Badesdowa River (Mud River)
- Otokwin River
- Pipestone River

“The winter road season is a very crucial time for my people,” Beardy said. “It’s a short window of time for my First Nations to truck vital goods and services into their communities at a substantially lower cost than if they had flown them in.”

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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