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NEWS RELEASE

Monday April 27, 2009 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN WELCOMES REAFFIRMATION OF ONTARIO'S COMMITMENT TO RESOURCE BENEFITS SHARING

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy welcomed today's reaffirmation by the Government of Ontario of its commitment to resource benefits sharing with Aboriginal communities.

"I am encouraged that the Government of Ontario will honour this very important commitment and I welcome the opportunity to establish what a fair and equitable system for resource benefits sharing should look like," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "The Government of Ontario made commitments to resource benefits sharing last year. This is a good start, and NAN Chiefs are anxious for more details on how this will impact their First Nations."

Resource benefits sharing is expected to promote economic development and spin-offs from natural resource development as well as job creation and skills training for Aboriginal communities. It is included in the Government of Ontario's Far North Planning Initiative as well as its Mining Act modernization initiative.

"When our First Nations signed Treaty 5 and Treaty 9 there was an understanding they would share in the wealth that came from the development of our lands. More than 100 years later we still do not have a have a mechanism by which NAN First Nations will see these benefits," said Beardy. "Our hope is that we can finally develop a framework for resource benefit sharing that creates and strengthens economic opportunities for First Nations while ensuring that our homelands, our communities, and our Aboriginal and treaty rights are respected."

A NAN Resource Revenue/Benefits Sharing Technical Group, an inclusive negotiations process, is currently developing proposals aimed at ensuring that NAN First Nations share fairly in benefits from natural resource development.

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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