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NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday June 3, 2009 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

GRAND CHIEF CLARIFIES NAN'S POSITION ON FAR NORTH LAND USE PLANNING BILL

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy today clarified NAN's position on the Far North Land Use Planning bill announced Tuesday by the Government of Ontario following several misleading media reports.

"I want to make it very clear that at no point have I said that NAN has endorsed, has supported or has been behind this legislation. Any such media reports are inaccurate and do not reflect my position as Grand Chief of Nishnawbe Aski Nation," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "What I have said is this legislation is not good enough yet, but we are giving the Government of Ontario another chance to consult with our First Nation communities to get it right."

The Far North Land Use Planning legislation was introduced for first reading in the Ontario Legislature on June 2. It deals with planning in the northern two-thirds of Ontario, the most important part of the province in terms of future resource development.

"First Nations have always wanted community-based land use planning, but not under the terms we see in this legislation. We are particularly concerned that First Nations without band status have been excluded and that this legislation will effectively force First Nations to land-use plan their way out of a super-park," said Beardy.

"The Far North is our homeland and has been kept pristine by the Cree and Ojibway people for generations. We recognize the Far North's ability to absorb the effects of climate change, but this legislation protecting 225,000 square kilometres of our territory has potential to block us from developing our communities so the carbon sink can remain intact to right the environmental wrongs of the industrialized south," said Beardy. "We are not opposed to the goals of conservation, but Ontario's efforts to save the planet must not come at First Nations' expense."

NAN is demanding that the Government of Ontario initiate a strong community consultation process before the legislation proceeds to second and third reading.

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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