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NEWS RELEASE

Friday September 4, 2009 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN WELCOMES ABORIGINAL LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy welcomes Ontario's plan to create jobs for the north in the renewable energy sector through its announcement of an Aboriginal Loan Guarantee Program.

"Today's announcement is a welcomed first step in creating an environment that will allow our First Nations to become proponents in power development both as developers and owners of transmission lines as well as of local power generation in and around their communities," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "However, we need to ensure proposed First Nations energy programs can be viable. To do that we will need to see the creation of sound loan guarantees; a remote feed-in tariff that recognizes remote costs and the inclusion of grant-based resourcing for capital needs to the loan guarantee program before it can be truly effective, otherwise our First Nations will not qualify for the loans."

Beardy also said it is essential that First Nations be involved in development of the application and review process before it is made available in the fall of 2009.

"We truly welcome the effort made by the ministry to create an inclusive environment in the energy sector and we look forward to working with Minister Smitherman to see that this occurs," Beardy said, noting there are several major energy projects that First Nations are currently in the early stages of developing. "The projects being considered are transformative in that they will finally result in affordable energy for communities and because First Nations can have a stake in the energy sector as entrepreneurs. This announcement can also increase the potential realization of those long discussed all-weather roads."

Beardy is looking forward to meeting with the province to further discuss the program.

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

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