Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday October 21, 2009 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CHILD WELFARE CUTS HURTING NAN FIRST NATIONS

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose is concerned that a child welfare agency in NAN territory may have to close, as funding cuts by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services are already being felt in NAN First Nation communities.

"Payukotayno James & Hudson Bay Family Services may be forced to close its doors due to a lack of funding and recent provincial funding cuts, even though its volume is up 20 per cent," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose. "Cutting an approximate $23 million from Ontario's already underfunded child welfare agencies puts this and other already vulnerable First Nation child welfare agencies in an even tougher position to serve our people."

Payukotayno James & Hudson Bay Family Services, located in Moose Factory, serves First Nations along the James and Hudson's Bay coasts. Tikinagan Children and Family Services, located in Sioux Lookout, is also affected by provincial funding cuts. It serves 30 First Nation communities in the western portion of NAN territory as well as Pickle Lake, Savant Lake and Allanwater.

"We are especially outraged that the cuts to First Nation child welfare agencies appear to be disproportionally higher than non-Aboriginal agencies, as nearly $4.25 million of the approximate $23 million in cuts was to four First Nation child welfare agencies," said Waboose. "First Nation children are some of the most vulnerable members in our communities. Leaving them without adequate support services will only contribute to the challenges they currently face."

NAN has joined First Nation leadership in Ontario including Chiefs of Ontario and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians in a call for the Government of Ontario to immediately reverse the funding cuts.

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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