Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Thursday October 22, 2009 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN STATEMENT ON PASSING OF MINING ACT AMENDMENT

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy today acknowledged the Government of Ontario's efforts to address First Nations concerns through the *Mining Act* amendment bill passed by the legislature Wednesday, but remains adamant that NAN First Nations must have the right to decide on mining activity in NAN territory.

"We recognize Ontario's effort to make the revised *Mining Act* the first legislation to recognize Aboriginal and treaty rights," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "Our primary concern remains that NAN First Nations must have free, prior and informed consent before any activity can take place in their homelands."

The Grand Chief acknowledged that progress has been made in addressing some concerns of NAN First Nations since the introduction of the *Mining Act* amendment bill in April 2009, but said more work needs to be done.

"We are pleased that Ontario has incorporated a dispute resolution process but we need to ensure that it works for First Nations," said Beardy, who is concerned that the legislation does not fully recognize the rights of First Nations to decide on mining in NAN territory.

"Free, prior and informed consent means that no prospecting, staking, exploration or mine development can proceed without a written agreement in place with the First Nation," said Beardy. "That is the standard expressed in Article 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That is the standard we expect Ontario to meet."

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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