Nishnawbe Aski Nation
ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐠᑭ ᐃᔅᑯᓂᑲᓇᓐ ᐅᑭᒪᐧᐃᓐ
100 Back Street, Unit 200, Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730 www.nan.on.ca

NEWS RELEASE

February 16, 2010 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN RESPONDS TO AN ARTICLE ON 'RESERVE RELOCATION'

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy along with other First Nation leadership is responding to a recently published article suggesting '*…First Nation leaders should consider the relocation of reserves that are deemed not viable'*.

"The comments from the writer indicate that there is no hope for some First Nation communities," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "Historically, research says some of the reserve land is the most useless and yet provincial policies originally put communities where they are, away from hydro, agriculture and minerals. Now, after being put out of the way from society and the economy, the writer suggests these 'non-viable' communities be put closer to urban centers? To bring about a positive change, the First Nations must be afforded the basic Human Rights like everybody else. First Nation societies have a special relationship to the Creator and to the land. Once we are displaced from that understanding we become dysfunctional as the reserve system has displayed."

The article from the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, states "*…some of the most isolated First Nation reserves are not capable of economic growth…indigenous leaders should consider alternate sites or the creation of new reserves closer to urban areas…*"
The article also makes reference to the NAN First Nation community of Kashechewan saying "*…to be confined to an isolated area without hope is a recipe for social dysfunction…it is no wonder communities such as Kashechewan suffer from obscene levels of suicide, addiction, martial breakdown and violence…*"

"We have to look at how we got here in the first place," said Kashechewan Chief Jonathan Solomon. "Legislation and policies such as the Ontario Mining Act have forced many communities from benefitting from resources and development and that's why we are in the situation we are in. First Nations should have the opportunity to sustain themselves."

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.

***

For more information please contact *Amy Harris, Media Relations Officer – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625 4906 or (807) 252-2806 mobile.*