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NEWS RELEASE

Thursday April 1, 2010 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR WINTER-ROAD COMMUNITIES

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy together with other NAN leadership today declared a state of emergency for winter-road communities at the annual NAN Winter Chiefs Assembly taking place at the Travelodge Airlane in Thunder Bay. Beardy says the short winter season this year has posed a serious threat for some NAN communities.

"Our remote communities are facing extreme shortfalls of fuel to run schools and homes as well as a shortage in housing supplies for building and renovating," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "In some cases, these communities will now be forced to pay upwards of three-thousand dollars for one mid-sized aircraft to transport essential goods to their communities. Winter-road communities are not in a financial position to afford that kind of expense."

There are 29 remote communities in NAN territory that rely on the winter road network to transport essential goods and materials through the winter months. This year, warmer weather conditions across Northern Ontario resulted in the winter road network to be open for only three weeks. NAN leadership is calling on the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to provide emergency funds to cover all air delivery costs to transport needed goods to the affected communities.

"Program services such as the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service detachments in some communities are in great need of materials to make repairs to their deteriorating facilities," said Beardy. "This is an urgent matter because construction materials are time-sensitive under the stimulus funding provided by the federal government. INAC must come forward and help with the delivery, so construction on buildings such as these can take place this summer."

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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