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NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday May 4, 2010 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN SUPPORTS FWFN IN EFFORT TO HALT HST

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Les Louttit together with other NAN representation showed support today for the Fort William First Nation by participating in a protest in opposition to the new proposed Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).

"Ontario neglected their legal obligation to consult with First Nations on the HST," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Les Louttit. "It is important for us to show a united front because the HST will negatively impact not one, but all First Nations in Ontario."

The Ontario government plans to implement the new proposed HST on July 1, 2010. Currently, First Nations' citizens are exempt from the Ontario Provincial Sales Tax. Once the HST comes into effect, the new tax will be administered by the Government of Canada under the same rules as the Federal Goods and Services Tax. This poses a serious tax burden on First Nations as they will be forced to pay the provincial portion of the HST and no longer qualify for the immediate point-of-sale tax exemption.

According to a recent report, Dr. Fred Lazar, a Professor at the Schulich School of Business at York University, estimated that once the HST is implemented '*the potential annual burden for all First Nations in Ontario to start is in the range of $85 million to $121 million'*.

"The cost of living in NAN communities is already extremely high and many of the community members will struggle with trying to cover the added tax when purchasing essential goods," said Louttit. "The point-of-sale tax exemption is a treaty right and the government must honour that right. We plan to continue to lobby both levels of government and continue to support other First Nations organizations in their efforts to stop the implementation of the HST."

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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