Nishnawbe Aski Nation
ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐢᑭ 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

**Thursday May 20, 2010** **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## NAN SAYS NEW NATIONAL BOREAL FOREST AGREEMENT DISRESPECTS FIRST NATIONS RIGHTS

**THUNDER BAY, ON:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy says the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement, recently signed by Canadian forest product companies and environmental groups, disrespects First Nations rights.

"Nobody has the right to develop an agreement that affects any of NAN's lands and resources without consultation, accommodation and consent from us," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "This Agreement was made without our knowledge and treats NAN as a stakeholder – not a government."

The Agreement involves the suspension of logging on nearly 29 million hectares of Boreal Forest across Canada to allow for caribou protection planning – a portion of NAN territory is included in that area. In 2004, the same attempt was made to make decisions over the NAN territory when environmental groups and forestry and energy companies developed a 50/50 split of the land (50% for protected land and 50% for development).

Recently NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly unanimously passed a resolution stating among other points that *'Free and Informed Consent of NAN First Nations is required before any significant steps are taken in relation to any private development projects and any Canadian government policy exercises that may affect any part of NAN territory.'*

"The right of consent is reflected in the spirit and intent of both Treaty 9 and Treaty 5, this is our right," said Beardy. "We must be part of the decision making, benefit from resources in our traditional territory, and be involved in how the land is managed. Environmental groups and forest product companies must have our free, prior and informed consent on these matters. These kinds of agreements have to stop and the true decision makers, First Nations, must be the ones to have the final say."

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 or by email aharris@nan.on.ca.*