Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday May 25, 2010 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN SUPPORTS COUCHICHING FIRST NATION IN ESTABLISHMENT OF HIGHWAY TOLL BOOTH

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy together with other NAN leadership are showing support for the Grand Council Treaty #3 community of Couchiching in the establishment of a toll booth on Highway 11, west of the Noden Causeway.

"Toll booths and other such blockades are what First Nations have been forced to resort to because of the Government's unwillingness to work to resolve our issues," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "We support Couchiching First Nation in their effort as their issues are a mirror-image of what's happening within NAN territory."

One reason for the establishment of the toll booth is Couchiching First Nation's land claim issues with the Highway 11 East claim which dissects their community. Community members argue that a portion of Highway 11 is part of their reserve land and the community has not received compensation for a surveying error when the Highway was constructed. Another issue involves land contamination on the lake side of Highway 11. This, stems from sawmills that used to operate on the reserve land. Issues with both Government and Industry resonate within NAN territory, as NAN First Nations are dealing with similar troubles.

"It is an ongoing battle, dealing with the Federal and Provincial governments as well as industry," said Beardy. "The fact is that we have constitutionally protected aboriginal Treaty rights. It is our right to have a say on how our lands are developed and how we can be a part of that development. We want to protect our natural resources, but at the same time benefit from them. Governments don't see the needs of the North - they are blind to it. Advocacy of the North should come from the North."

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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