



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN CONTINUES TO URGE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY FORESTRY TENURE SYSTEM

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy says the Ontario government needs to implement a community forestry tenure system. The position of having a community forestry tenure system has been consistently provided since NAN’s initial participation in the *Northern Ontario Sustainable Communities Partnership* committee and later endorsed through a NAN Chief’s resolution in 2007.

“A community forestry tenure system would see our communities, and not the private sector, managing the forests, which is the way it should be,” said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. “Despite requests for a forest tenure model that better caters to First Nations, Ontario’s proposed framework on forest tenure reform lacks our participation.”

Ontario’s proposed reform implies a new approach with no new changes that give First Nations greater opportunity in the forestry sector. The new reform is expected to establish business models of Local Forest Management Corporations (LFMCs) who would assume the role of management, marketing and competitive wood sales. First Nations will be offered one or more seats on the Board of Directors for the LFMCs but will have no veto power as board members. The proposed framework also states that 75 per cent of harvested wood will continue to be allocated to existing users, therefore removing the opportunity for new mills and manufacturing opportunities for First Nations and others. The remaining 25 per cent will be offered via tendered sales (auctions) – a scenario that limits meaningful First Nation participation.

“This proposed reform offers no opportunity for First Nations to acquire wood from new ventures because First Nations will not be able to outbid organizations with high levels of capital,” said Beardy. “The Ontario Government needs to give us realistic deadlines so we can better formulate our position. We are once again being treated as stakeholders and not as a government. This does not meet our needs.”

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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