Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Thursday June 10, 2010 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN CHIEFS' OFFER COUNTER-PROPOSAL TO ONTARIO'S HEARINGS ON BILL 191

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy together with the NAN Chiefs of Attawapiskat, Moose Cree, Sandy Lake, Slate Falls and Webequie offered a counter-proposal to Ontario's unilateral decision to hold hearings on Bill 191-*The Far North Act* in their communities during the week of June 14, 2010. These Chiefs are supported by a resolution, unanimously passed by NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly, at their annual Keewaywin Conference.

"We had informed Ontario's MPPs in advance that the dates they decided on would not work and Ontario was advised of such - it's frustrating," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "We are looking forward to those hearings however our communities were not properly accomodated. If Ontario is expecting a new relationship with us, then there has to be mutual respect as per our Treaty understanding."

The timing of this latest gaffe by Ontario was particularly unfortunate, coming on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty No. 5 adhesion, which covers a portion of northwestern Ontario.

"We want to turn a new page in our relations with the Crown," said Sandy Lake Chief Adam Fiddler. "We don't want to start our next 100 years together with a fight. I hope they (Ontario) see that our message is about cooperation, not rejection. That's why we've said for us to get together with them in July or August and work together to get this right. Ontario's presence in the communities would be welcomed however they have to come in a meaningful and respectful way. Short notice like this, isn't acceptable."

Bill 191 recently passed Second Reading and is subject to further revision prior to Third Reading, which Ontario has scheduled for this fall – despite the objections of NAN First Nations.

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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