Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Thursday January 13, 2011 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN SUPPORTS MATAWA FIRST NATIONS IN PUSH FOR INCLUSION IN RING OF FIRE DEVELOPMENTS

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Les Louttit issued the following statement today following the call by Matawa First Nations to be included in discussions and decisions pertaining to development in the area known as the Ring of Fire.

"The NAN political office has an ongoing mandate from its member First Nations to provide political advocacy and support on their aspirations in addressing resource developments which will impact their lands and waters. In the NAN territory, governments and industry must obtain the free, prior and informed consent from NAN First Nations before any significant steps are taken pertaining to developments in their traditional territory. We are not against resource development however there must be mutual beneficial agreements in place to ensure that First Nations benefit equally from any wealth derived from development on our homelands, such as the potential that is present in the Ring of Fire area. NAN supports the position taken by the Matawa First Nations for inclusion in the Ring of Fire discussions, planning, decision-making and project implementation. We will no longer accept any external decisions that exclude NAN First Nations from participating equally in all development activities in our territory," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Les Louttit.

The right of consent is supported by NAN Aboriginal Rights, the spirit and intent of Treaty No. 9 and Treaty No. 5, landmark Supreme Court of Canada decisions, and international law, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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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