



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**Wednesday April 13, 2011**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **NAN SAYS ONTARIO DOES NOT TAKE FIRST NATIONS CONCERNS SERIOUSLY IN THE INTRODUCTION OF BILL 151**

**THUNDER BAY, ON:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy says the introduction of Bill 151 – Ontario’s Forest Tenure Modernization Act, largely fails First Nations and is yet another decision unilaterally made in a long string of disrespectful legislation being imposed on First Nations.

“It is very clear that Ontario does not take the concerns of First Nations seriously with regards to the forestry tenure reform process as, yet again, Ontario solicits input, then unilaterally makes decisions without consideration of those who are directly impacted,” said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy.

In November 2010, a meeting was held involving NAN, other First Nation leadership, and the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry (MNDMF) to discuss points of concern regarding Ontario’s forestry tenure review process. MNDMF committed to recognizing and addressing three key areas of concern for First Nations:

- a) To actively seek input from First Nations and further, recommendations would be developed;
- b) To consider other forestry tenure models including community managed forests.
- c) Recognition would be given to Aboriginal and Treaty rights, and the duty of the Crown to consult, in whatever legislation which is developed.

MNDMF reneged on commitments made to NAN in the introduction of Bill 151 as it does not contain information on working with First Nations, nor’ gives any recognition to Aboriginal and Treaty rights. In addition, the two new forest tenure models being pursued by MNDMF does not allow for community managed forests and does not allow for the consultation and accommodation of First Nations.

“The best approach is to implement a community forestry tenure system putting First Nations in charge of managing forests on their homelands,” said Beardy. “With the introduction of Bill 151, it is blatantly obvious that Ontario has no intentions of making good on its commitments therefore, it is nearly impossible to work towards a meaningful relationship.”

On Monday April 11, 2011, Beardy made his concerns known once again in a letter sent to MNDMF.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty No. 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario.

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