



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Monday May 2, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN SUPPORTS CONSTANCE LAKE FIRST NATION IN PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) is expressing its support for Constance Lake First Nation in the effort to foster meaningful dialogue with government and industry while enforcing the duty to consult and accommodate, and acquire consent from the First Nation prior to further mineral exploration drilling in the community's traditional territory.

Today, NAN Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin and NAN Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose participated in a peaceful demonstration near the community where Pagwachuan River crosses Highway 11.

“We support Constance Lake First Nation in exercising their right to give free, prior and informed consent to mineral exploration and other issues pertaining to their homelands,” said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin. “Government and industry must engage in meaningful dialogue with those First Nations who are directly affected by any activity. When expectations from all parties are clear, there is less likelihood that conflict will take place.”

Last week, Constance Lake First Nation filed a motion in the Ontario Superior Court to seek an order for Zenyatta Ventures Ltd., to stop drilling activity taking place in the ‘Heartland’ (an area traditionally used by the community and also contains sacred burial sites). On Friday, the community won the injunction and Zenyatta was ordered to halt exploration activities until May 9, 2011.

With the potential for high volumes of mineral extraction in Northern Ontario, lack of consultation, accommodation, and consent is being conveyed by a number of First Nations within NAN. In April 2010, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly unanimously passed a resolution that private development or government policy that directly affects NAN territory cannot proceed without the free, prior and informed consent of the affected First Nation, and that consent shall only be given on a mutually-beneficial basis (meaning all involved would benefit equally in all aspects of development). Furthermore, the right of free, prior and informed consent by First Nations is clearly laid out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

“It has been made clear time and time again, that First Nations will continue to assert their rights as mining development proceeds without the inclusion of First Nations in every aspect of the process including early exploration,” said Metatawabin. “Increased certainty, and effective management of relations with First Nations, will ensure peaceful co-existence in the North and increased economic opportunities for everyone involved.”

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.

For more information please contact *Amy Harris, Director of Communications – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625-4906 or (807) 252-2806 mobile or by email aharris@nan.on.ca.*