



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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100 Back Street, Unit 200, Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730 www.nan.on.ca

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN REITERATES OPPOSITION TO ONTARIO'S FOREST TENURE MODERNIZATION ACT

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy says the Ontario Government's pressure to ram-through Bill 151 – *Ontario's Forest Tenure Modernization Act*, undermines First Nations in their right to be properly consulted and accommodated with their concerns, on any matter affecting the lands and resources of their traditional territories. He made his remarks following this week's decision by the Standing Committee on General Government recommending Bill 151 be sent for Third Reading despite there not being any inclusion of recommendations brought forward by First Nations in the development of the Bill.

“We (First Nations) will not be subject to yet another piece of one-sided legislation that challenges our constitutionally protected Aboriginal and Treaty rights to be properly and adequately consulted and accommodated on matters such as forestry,” said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. “We will exercise our own jurisdiction in determining what is best for the resources in our traditional territory – not what the province thinks is best. Bill 151 must be scrapped and replaced with a Bill that reflects the recommendations by First Nations.”

Bill 151 presents two forest tenure models – Local Forest Management Corporations and Enhanced Shareholder Sustainable Forestry License. Both models do not take into account the concerns continually outlined by First Nations. Neither model allows for community-managed forests, nor does either allow for the consultation and accommodation of First Nations rights and interests.

The position of having community-managed forests has been consistently provided since NAN's initial participation in the *Northern Ontario Sustainable Communities Partnership* committee and later endorsed through a NAN Chiefs' resolution. Furthermore, Article 19 in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as endorsed by Canada states ‘*shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them*’

“There must be a new forest tenure model whereby communities, and not industry or government become the managers of the forest and have the final say,” said Beardy.

“First Nations must have an opportunity to be part of economic development, including benefits that may derive from forestry practices, in order to ensure long-term sustainability for generations to come.”

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.*