Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday May 17, 2011 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN RESPONSE TO ONTARIO ATTORNEY GENERAL STATEMENTS ON JURY ROLLS

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose today responded to the recent public statements of Ontario Attorney General Chris Bentley reported by the Canadian Press to the effect that 'issues around jury selection have been resolved' in respect to the Thunder Bay jury roll.

"Under no circumstances does NAN agree that the issue of exclusion of First Nations from jury rolls has been resolved. Until the Government of Ontario does the right thing and conducts an inquiry and reports on the truth of the systematic exclusion of First Nations from our justice system, this matter will not be resolved. We, along with First Nation coalition partners, have been seeking such a report since September 2008, but until the Court of Appeal issued its judgment in March 2011 we were largely ignored," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose. "Tragically, there has been another death in our communities and yet the Attorney General claims that Ontario is doing everything it can. After the deaths of seven of our teenagers in similar circumstances since 2000, I do not accept that this government can credibly claim that they have resolved anything."

Julian Falconer, NAN's legal counsel on the Bushie Inquest and the jury roll issues, stated: "We were retained to pursue legal proceedings that would result in a complete report on the scope and circumstances surrounding the lack of First Nations jury representativeness in the Province of Ontario. The systematic exclusion of communities of people from the justice system such as occurred here, is unprecedented and yet First Nations continue to be denied what would be an automatic for mainstream Canadians; a full accounting from the Province's Attorney General. To use the words of the Court of Appeal in the recent Bushie case (par. 72), officials from the A.G. and the Coroner's Office "have not been forthcoming" and have given First Nations the "run-around" in the face of reasonable requests for information. These issues are far from resolved."

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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