



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN CONTINUES OPPOSITION TO ONTARIO'S NEW FORESTRY MODERNIZATION ACT: STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy says community forestry will play a vital role in the revitalization of Northwestern Ontario's economy. He made the remarks today following this week's decision by the Government of Ontario to push Bill 151 – *Ontario's Forest Tenure Modernization Act* through Third Reading, a Bill which NAN has and will continue to adamantly and publically oppose.

“With Bill 151, the Province of Ontario is completely cutting-out the say of First Nations and Northerners in how they see the forests managed. Our region has taken so many economic hits, forestry included, we would have thought that Ontario would be looking at the best possible way to revitalize our Northern economy by putting more people back to work but instead are again taking the control away from people at the grass-roots level,” said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. “Community-lead forestry would not only provide a say in how the forests are managed, but also widen the scope on economic opportunity, meaning more jobs. It would offer a more sustainable future for our First Nations.”

Bill 151 focuses on the establishment of Local Forest Management Corporations, which represent a new forest tenure model. A second forest tenure model, Enhanced Shareholder Sustainable Forestry License will be a focus of Ontario in the future. 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 and challenges the right of the free, prior and informed consent as clearly laid out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Bill was rammed-through Third Reading this week undermining First Nations in their right to be adequately consulted and accommodated with their concerns on any matters affecting the lands and resources in their traditional homelands. Despite the Bill not containing language to promote community forestry, NAN will continue to advocate on behalf of First Nations for community forestry and continue to oppose Bill 151.

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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