Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Monday May 30, 2011 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN SAYS OPP COMMENDATIONS SEND WRONG MESSAGE TO FIRST NATIONS

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy is speaking out against controversial commendations that were handed out to several Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers last week. Officers involved in the dispute in Pikangikum First Nation last year were commended for their exemplary performance, and another officer who shot a First Nations woman in Kenora, Ontario was given an award for bravery. NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy issued the following statement today.

"The OPP is sending the wrong message to First Nations people by rewarding their officers in this manner. These officers are trained to be combative, and they are also trained to use other equipment that could be used in situations like that in Kenora, a firearm should be the last resort. Pikangikum residents were exercising their right to protect the lands that are traditionally theirs – they have the right to say how their homelands will be operated. We have no control over how the OPP decide to operate, even if it's not right from our perspective. The commendations, from our view, are glorified and unnecessary. Again, it sends the wrong message to our people," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy.

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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