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NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday August 23, 2011 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NUNAVUT PLANE CRASH ECHOES THE NEED FOR A MORE EFFICIENT COORDINATED EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR NAN'S REMOTE FIRST NATIONS

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy says the plane crash that killed twelve people near the hamlet of Resolute Bay in northern Nunavut over the weekend resonates with First Nation communities in NAN territory, who know all too well the perils of northern air travel.

"We feel the pain and grief that family and friends are experiencing over the loss of their loved ones," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "The Nishnawbe Aski people take the same risks flying across the north every day for medical, work and education purposes. They have no other choice but to fly because of the remoteness of NAN First Nations."

Despite the Resolute Bay crash prompting a quick response from the nearby assembled military, which happened to be on a training exercise in the region, the response highlights the usual lags in reaching remote northern crises.

In 2009, a plane crash near Cat Lake First Nation claimed the lives of three people, and in 2003 eight people lost their lives due to a plane crash in Nibinamik First Nation. For NAN, the recent crash in Nunavut is a reminder of how vital a coordinated emergency response protocol is for remote areas across northern Ontario.

"There are hundreds of scheduled and chartered flights across the North every day. An efficient response time is crucial and should be examined further as traffic in NAN territory is on the rise due to increasing scientific research, mineral and gas exploration and an escalating mining industry," said 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. www.nan.on.ca

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