



## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### NAN REJECTS MEETINGS AS ALTERNATIVE TO PUBLIC INQUIRY

**THUNDER BAY, ON:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose has rejected an offer by the Government of Ontario to convene meetings instead of a provincial Commission of Inquiry into the deaths of seven NAN youth who have died under similar circumstances since 2000 while attending school in Thunder Bay.

In a formal letter to the Government of Ontario, NAN Deputy Grand Chief Waboose wrote today:

*“This call for an Inquiry is out of recognition for the disturbingly similar circumstances of the seven deaths since year 2000 and out of respect for the needs of the families and communities who mourn their losses. It is clear that the Coroner’s Inquest process cannot accomplish what needs to be done. While NAN has often addressed issues through multi-lateral meetings, no amount of meetings will accomplish the goal of full and credible scrutiny of all seven deaths.”*

NAN repeats its expectation that the Premier will provide a clear and forthright answer to NAN’s call for a Commission of Inquiry.

The call for a Commission of Inquiry follows last week’s ruling by the coroner in the Inquest into the Death of Reggie Bushie that the inquest cannot proceed as the 2011 jury roll is legally invalid.

Reggie Bushie, 15, died in 2007 while attending school at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in Thunder Bay. His body was recovered from the McIntyre River on November 1, 2007 and an inquest into his death was scheduled to begin in January 2009. The inquest was delayed, however, after NAN and legal counsel for the Bushie family questioned the validity of the selection process for the five-member jury.

While the death of Reggie Bushie was to be the focus of the inquest, the deaths of four other NAN youth who died in Thunder Bay under similar circumstances were to be considered as part of the overall context. Since then, two more NAN youth – Kyle Morriseau, 17, and Jordan Wabasse, 15 - have also died in Thunder Bay under similar circumstances.

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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**For more information on the exclusion of First Nations from jury rolls:**

*<http://fcbarristers.com/Falconer/index.html>*