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NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday November 25, 2014 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT SHOWS NUTRITION NORTH ISN'T WORKING

THUNDER BAY: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic says today's report by the Auditor General shows the Nutritional North Canada food subsidy program isn't working and should be replaced with a new approach to improve the health of First Nations, not increase profits for retailers.

"We are not surprised the Auditor General couldn't show that the food pricing subsidy was being passed on to consumers, as our own food pricing initiative has raised the question about the profit retailers are making at the expense of the health of our First Nations," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic. "Healthy and affordable food is still out of reach for many of our communities and it is clear this program isn't working."

The Auditor General's 2014 fall report concluded that food subsidies are not being distributed properly and, critically, that the federal government has not verified whether the northern retailers are passing on the full subsidy to consumers.

NAN has attempted to address the critical shortcomings from the Nutrition North program with the federal government and the Nutrition North Canada advisory board since 2013.

"We are pleased that eligibility requirements have been called into question, as 15 NAN communities were deemed ineligible when this program replaced the Food Mail Program in 2011," said Kakegamic. "The federal government needs to work with us to restructure this program from a profit-driven business model to one with a health-based focus that ensures transparency, accountability and addresses the remoteness of NAN First Nations."

A crippling lack of community infrastructure is contributing to malnutrition of children, especially in remote First Nations. NAN is calling for the Government of Canada to take a strategic approach and develop a national food policy where First Nations are major contributors to ensure all communities have access to healthy and nutritious food. In the meantime, NAN is developing community-based solutions to rebuild food sovereignty.

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