



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday February 22, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN SUPPORTS PROTECTION OF K.I. LANDS

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy is declaring the current mining situation in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation (Big Trout Lake) a clear sign from the provincial government regarding Aboriginal and Treaty rights and resource development within NAN territory – an area inhabiting 49 First Nation communities covering two-thirds of Ontario.

“We had high expectations after the November 2005 Mikisew Supreme Court decision regarding Crown duty to consult and accommodate with First Nations when activities like mining threaten our Aboriginal and Treaty rights,” said Grand Chief Stan Beardy. “The fact Ontario has not implemented this decision in our province sets the tone for First Nation and government relations for resource development in NAN territory.”

Beardy’s comments come after a southern Ontario mining company called Platinex began mobilizing equipment in the NAN First Nation community early last week.

“Fifteen years of Supreme Court decisions have yet to be reflected in provincial and federal policies,” said Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation spokesperson John Cutfeet. “Our treaty partners continue to disregard direction from the Supreme Court in dealing with our people.”

Cutfeet added an additional seven O.P.P. officers stationed in the community to “keep the peace” have contributed to increased tension and paranoia among community members.

“We’ve been told by the O.P.P. that the extra officers have been brought in to keep the peace in the community, however their presence, particularly the vehicle checks of those coming or leaving the community, has created increased tension,” said Cutfeet. “When will the lessons of Ipperwash be learned?”

To date there has been no indication by the Province of Ontario on when the process of consultation and accommodation of Aboriginal and Treaty rights will begin.

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