

~ PRESS RELEASE~

**KITCHENUHMAYKOOSIB INNINUWUG, MUSKRAT DAM, WAPEKEKA AND WAWAKAPEWIN
DECLARE A MORATORIUM ON MINING EXPLORATION AND FORESTRY IN THE FAR NORTH:
NO MEANS NO**

Thunder Bay- Chiefs and representatives from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, Muskrat Dam, Wapekeka, and Wawakapewin First Nations joined together in a common cause and declared a moratorium on mining exploration and forestry on their traditional territories. These communities are located in the so-called Far North---north of the 51st parallel in Ontario.

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, Muskrat Dam, Wapekeka and Wawakapewin have always shared a common land and culture. Increasingly mining giants like De Beers and Kennecott are pressing Far North communities for access to their traditional territories.

The provincial government has recently announced a \$15 million Geoscience mapping initiative in the Far North and is currently holding public consultations on a new Mineral Development Strategy. All this adds up to more development pressures on Far North communities.

Donny Morris, Chief of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug said, "We have said it before and we will say it again. No exploration means no exploration. Which part of NO doesn't the Ontario government understand?"

Elder Allan Beardy of Muskrat Dam said, "About twenty years ago, mining exploration destroyed an important area for hunting and fishing sturgeon. We have no assurance that new exploration will not bring similar problems within Muskrat Dam traditional territory."

"The communities have provided a clear direction to governments and mining companies like De Beers, Kennecott, Platinex, and Superior Diamonds on this troublesome issue," concluded Muskrat Dam Chief Vernon Morris.

Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said, "Ontario seems to have forgotten that in the Far North, it is the communities, not the policy makers and corporate executives in the towers of Toronto and Vancouver that set the agenda. The moratorium is a wake up call for all those operating under the illusion that there is a "free entry" to our traditional lands."

A steering committee was formed to continue the work of Wednesday's meeting.

For more information please contact:

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******Endorsement - if you support, please put on your letterhead or BCR and fax back to the NAN office.**

***Whereas** we have the right to own, control, and use the lands and territories, including the total environment of the lands, air, waters, animals, plants and other resources which we have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used;*

***Whereas** we affirm and assert our right to oppose any intrusion onto our lands, ecosystems, waters and natural resources which we own, occupy or use including parks, patent lands and mining claims;*

***Whereas** we have the God given Right to continue our own way of life. This right is recognized and affirmed by civilized nations in the United Nations Covenants on Human Rights;*

***Whereas** we affirm that the health of our ecosystems, waters and natural resources, their availability to our communities and the very future of our communities are endangered by mining exploration and other forms of resource development;*

***THEREFORE** we the undersigned resolve to affirm our unwavering support for a moratorium on mining exploration and forestry on our traditional territories, unless, and until we are ready to lift the moratorium, recognizing the inherent fundamental human rights of our people and all Peoples to their own subsistence, cultures and way of life.*

We strongly call on all the communities in the Far North to heed the alert of mining exploration impacts and the alarming changes on our lands which we are now seeing and join us in our moratorium.