

MEDIA RELEASE

Chorus of celebrities call for release of Bob Lovelace and the KI Six

Mining Act reform needed to protect ecological values and prevent future conflicts

April 22, 2008

TORONTO – In the latest development in the jailing of Bob Lovelace and the KI Six, prominent Canadian authors, artists, musicians and publishers are calling on Premier Dalton McGuinty to halt mineral exploration in the lands of two Aboriginal communities in Ontario so that the imprisonment of seven Aboriginal leaders can be brought to an end. This would also help to protect two watersheds the communities have been fighting to keep healthy and clean.

A letter urging the Premier to comprehensively reform the *Mining Act* was sent today, Earth Day, by twenty prominent Canadians including Stephen Lewis, Margaret Atwood, Cathy Jones, Sarah Harmer, Alice Klein, George Erasmus and Jenny Whitley. High profile Canadians are adding their voices to a broad network of groups, organizations and Aboriginal Leaders supporting the right of Aboriginal communities to say 'NO' to mineral exploration and mining projects.

The release of the letter precedes a rally planned by the Chiefs of Ontario who are supporting the jailed leaders at Queen's Park tomorrow April 23rd (scheduled to begin at 1pm).

"The jailing of Bob Lovelace and the KI Six is a terrible injustice against First Nations people in this province," said Judy Rebick, CAW Sam Gindin Chair in Social Justice and Democracy, Ryerson University. "Premier Dalton McGuinty and his government must take the necessary steps to free them and put in place frameworks that would respect First Nations' rights to protect their land from unwanted industrial development," Ms. Rebick added.

On March 17, six members of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) were sentenced to 6 months for contempt charges related to their peaceful opposition to drilling for platinum on their traditional lands in the Boreal Forest. On February 15, Bob Lovelace, a university professor and spokesperson for the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, was sentenced to six months detention and fined \$25,000, for opposition to uranium exploration on land subject to a longstanding, unresolved land claim in Eastern Ontario. In addition, the community was fined \$10,000 and Chief Paula Sherman \$15,000. The message being sent by these actions to Aboriginal Peoples in Ontario is get on board with mining or you'll find yourself in jail.

"Ontario's mining legislation is over 100 years old and doesn't fit with modern society's understanding of ecosystems, climate change and human rights," says Anna Baggio, Director Conservation Land Use Planning of CPAWS Wildlands League. The so called 'Free Entry' system allows prospectors and exploration companies outside of cities and towns to come onto people's backyards and properties to explore for minerals without permission. "These companies can dig holes, blast rocks and cut down trees. They can do this because while landowners may own the surface rights to their properties they do not own the subsurface rights and there is no recourse for people who wish to stop it," Ms. Baggio added.

The celebrities call on Premier McGuinty to implement four key actions that will lead to the quick and peaceful resolution of this crisis. A copy of the letter can be found at www.wildlandsleague.org.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Anna Baggio, CPAWS Wildlands League, cell 416-453-3285 or by email at anna@wildlandsleague.org (contact for interviews with high profile Canadians)

Jacob Ostaman, Acting Spokesperson, KI, 807-537-2263

Paula Sherman, Co-chief Ardoch Algonquins, 613-329-3706

Chris Reid, Lawyer, 416-666-2914 cell