



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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NEWS RELEASE

Friday June 21, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF APPOINTED CO-CHAIR OF JURY REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

THUNDER BAY: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler is pleased to accept his appointment as co-chair of the Jury Review Implementation Committee announced by the Attorney General of Ontario today.

“The release of the Hon. Frank Iacobucci’s report on the jury roll was a key first step towards ensuring that First Nations are adequately represented in the Ontario justice system and I will be pleased to assist with the next vital steps in this process,” said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who holds the justice portfolio at NAN. “I look forward to working with the Ministry of the Attorney General to ensure that the recommendations of Justice Iacobucci’s report are implemented in a way that truly addresses the crisis of First Nations in the justice system.”

The establishment of an Implementation Committee was one of the recommendations from the Hon. Frank Iacobucci’s Independent Review of the jury roll system released on February 26, 2013. Government and First Nations members will oversee the review and implementation of the report’s recommendations.

“Justice Iacobucci concluded that the justice system in the North is in crisis and drew an important linkage between the question of First Nations exclusion from the jury system and the broader issue of First Nations’ alienation from the justice system,” said Julian Falconer, NAN’s legal counsel. “As lawyers and judges in a system that has excluded First Nations it is our responsibility to work collaboratively to create change.”

Justice Iacobucci was appointed to report on First Nation representation on Ontario jury rolls in August 2011 following court decisions questioning the validity of jury rolls with respect to representation by First Nations. His report, *First Nations Representation on Ontario Juries*, includes recommendations specific to NAN First Nations to ensure enhanced representation on the jury roll:

- the establishment of an Implementation Committee consisting of a substantial First Nations membership to be responsible for the oversight of the implementation of the 17 recommendations and related matters;
- the establishment of an Advisory Group to the Attorney General on matters affecting First Nations and the Justice System; and

- that the Ministry of the Attorney General conduct studies on legal representation, policing issues, and a review of the Aboriginal Court Worker program, for input by the Implementation Committee.

NAN has committed to work with the Government of Ontario to enhance the representation on jury rolls of First Nations persons living on reserve communities in NAN territory.

“NAN has fought for years to uncover the truth about the systematic exclusion of First Nations from the Ontario justice system,” said Fiddler, who will co-chair the committee with Assistant Deputy Attorney General Irwin Glasberg. “I look forward to working with the Ministry of the Attorney General to ensure that all First Nations can exercise their right to serve on juries and to ensure that there is a path forward to achieving justice for First Nations.”

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 in Canada.

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