



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday March 8, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HISTORIC DAY FOR FIRST NATIONS POLICING AS BILL 175 RECEIVES ROYAL ASSENT

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS) Board chairman, Mike Metatawabin, celebrated the passing of provincial legislation today that paves the way for the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service (NAPS) to become a fully mandated police force.

“For the first time we are aware of, an Indigenous police service will be mandated with the rule of law. This is an incredible achievement, and we thank our leaders, our members and our officers for their perseverance in the face of overwhelming adversity. We have fought for years for a legislative base to mandate NAPS under the *Police Services Act*, and the days of First Nations policing being run as a program may soon be over. This legislation will ensure that NAN First Nations will have access to the same level of policing as the rest of Ontario. The *Safer Ontario Act* ensures that the cultural autonomy of NAPS is respected, and I am pleased the Government of Ontario has recognized the unique challenges our communities face with the administration of justice,” said NAN Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler.

Bill 175, the *Safer Ontario Act, 2018*, received royal assent in the Ontario Legislature today. The legislation creates the option under the *Police Services Act* for First Nation police services to provide community safety backed by the rule of law.

NAN and NAPS have worked with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services for over two years to develop the new legal framework. It will allow NAPS and other First Nation police services to have the same legal status and be subject to the same adequacy standards for service as all other Ontario police. The law will require that NAPS receive sufficient funding to meet those standards.

“This is a historic day for the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service. We have been fighting for a legislative basis for policing since NAPS was established more than 20 years ago. We thank NAN, Police Chief Terry Armstrong and everyone involved for their diligence throughout this difficult process. We especially acknowledge the dedication of our officers who have done everything in their power to deliver adequate and effective policing, often without the resources the need. Safety backed by the rule of law will ensure that policing by our officers

will be equitable to other police services in this province. This will go a long way to improving the health and safety of our communities,” said NAPS Board Chairman Mike Metatawabin.

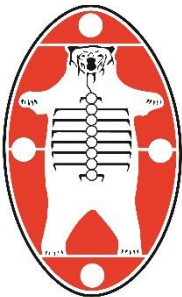
Background:

- 1994 - NAPS created to provide primary policing services to dozens of NAN communities. From the beginning, it is chronically underfunded as a discretionary government “program”. It is not legally considered an essential service and there is currently no requirement that it be funded to meet provincial standards. Its “First Nation Constables” lack the legal status of police officers.
- 1994-2015 - Numerous NAN resolutions demand government action on the underfunding of NAPS.
- February 18, 2015 – NAN Grand Chief, NAPS Board Chair, and the Minister and Deputy Minister of Community Safety sign terms of reference for the Adequacy Standards Table (AST) to negotiate a legislative framework for First Nation policing.
- August 5, 2016 - Parties to the AST reach final agreement on over 100 draft legislative amendments.
- November 2, 2017 - After further consultations with NAN and NAPS, the Government of Ontario incorporates AST amendments into a broader package of legislative reform called the *Strategy for a Safer Ontario* and tables Bill 175 in the Legislature.
- March 8, 2018: Bill 175 receives royal assent.



Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service

Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service (NAPS) is the largest First Nations police service in Canada and the second largest First Nations police service in North America, employing approximately 160 uniformed officers and 30 civilians. Based in Thunder Bay, NAPS polices 35 communities across NAN territory, which encompasses nearly two-thirds of the Province of Ontario.



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) 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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