



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eabametoong First Nation Declares State of Emergency

Epidemic of violent crimes brings community to its knees

Eabametoong First Nation, October 22nd, 2010— Eabametoong First Nation (Fort Hope) declared a State of Emergency today following a series of violent crimes that have caused community members to fear for their personal safety. Eabametoong First Nation is a remote, fly-in only community of more than 1200 people located in Northern Ontario.

Since January of 2010, the First Nation has suffered three homicides, several other violent incidents including the mutilation of animals, and more than forty-seven arsons. Even more cause for concern is that the perpetrators of many of these crimes have been identified as children and youth.

One arson attack resulted in the closure of the First Nation's school due to smoke damage, leaving local children without a learning facility. Other arson attacks have been committed against local families while they are sleeping in their homes.

Chief Lewis Nate of Eabametoong First Nation says; "The situation in our community has escalated out of control and is now so serious that many people sleep with a fire extinguisher beside them, fearful that their home could be set on fire next. No one should have to live like this, it's devastating. The people of Eabametoong are committed to working together to do whatever is needed to bring safety and order back to our community. But we can't do it alone; we are desperate for outside help."

Eabametoong First Nation is part of the Matawa First Nations Tribal Council. The Matawa Regional Chiefs are calling on all levels of government and any other service agencies or individuals to come to the aid of the community.

"We need short-term support and resources to help us restore safety and address the violent element in our community today. We need intervention workers to come to the aid of our troubled youth," continued Chief Nate. "We also need help to develop a long-term plan that will address the root issues that are causing our youth to turn to violence. Without a long-term plan how can we be sure that this type of emergency will not occur again?"



The community was also left without water for five days this year following a break-in into the water treatment facility in the First Nation. The community leaders were forced to make a decision to shut off water supply concerned that the drinking water had been contaminated.

“Please help us; please help the people of Eabametoong,” says Chief Nate.

-30-

For further information please contact:

Chief Lewis Nate
Eabametoong First Nation
T- (807) 242-7221
C- (807) 474-7844

Amanda Bay/Kristina Baraskewich
Communications Officer
T-(807) 767-4443 Ext#234
E- amanda@firedogpr.com