



# NEWS RELEASE

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## ***Wuskwatim misinformation campaign hits new low***

NELSON HOUSE, Manitoba – January 27, 2005 – A January 25 news release issued by the Nelson House Justice Seekers petitioning the Prime Minister and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for a forensic audit of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, marks a new low in the group's campaign of misinformation to delay the Wuskwatim project and discredit the First Nation's administration, NCN Chief Jerry Primrose said.

"The news release contains statements that are misleading and untrue. The call for a forensic audit of the Band's finances is irresponsible and designed to create fear and doubt among our Members," he said.

The group links its call for a forensic audit, covering a nine-year period, to recent charges of credit-card fraud against one member of NCN's Council. The charges against the councillor are before the courts, and the RCMP has access to Council's records as part of its investigation. The Council has fully cooperated with this investigation and the councillor has been suspended.

"We have nothing to hide. The audited financial reports of the Band Administration and Nisichawayasihk Trust are made available to our Members annually and our latest annual report provides a full summary of activities and operations of NCN's organizations and businesses," he said.

In the release, the group claims the department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has said it will investigate and conduct a review.

"I contacted INAC and was informed there is no review or investigation pending," Primrose said. "The Prime Minister's Office hasn't contacted the Council regarding this matter or any other allegations of impropriety."

There is no Band Council Resolution supporting a forensic audit, as claimed by this group. No such resolution has been tabled or voted on by Members or Council. The group also claims to have a petition of 800 Members supporting the so-called resolution, but it has neither been presented to nor seen by Council. This is the second time this group has claimed to have a petition of 800 Members opposed to some aspect of NCN Council.

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“We will not subject our First Nation to an unnecessary, time-wasting, expensive exercise to appease zealous political opponents who wish to bring down the administration of the First Nation, and halt progress towards development of the Wuskwatim project and almost anything we try to do,” Primrose said.

“For years, this small group, which is led by an unsuccessful candidate in the last NCN election, has been relentlessly spreading misinformation about the Wuskwatim project and criticizing this Council. Our First Nation has a recognized track record for good management and accountability, and it is unfortunate this group is trying to damage our First Nation’s reputation to further its own political agenda.”

The Federal Court of Appeal last year dismissed the group’s bid to overturn the 2002 election of NCN’s Council.

“One of the most blatant abuses of the truth is the group’s claim of ‘no consultations’ regarding the Wuskwatim agreement or side agreements being negotiated with Manitoba Hydro.”

NCN has consulted extensively with Members and other interested parties about the Wuskwatim project. “It is unlikely any community, First Nation or otherwise, has embarked on anything like the scale of our public consultative process that has been ongoing over five years,” he said.

Still, the group is calling for a two-year moratorium for consultation before the ratification vote on the Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement.

The group also implies it has the support of all NCN Elders.

“Again, this simply isn’t true,” Primrose said.

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*Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation is based in Nelson House, Manitoba, about 800 kilometres north of Winnipeg and 80 kilometres west of Thompson. NCN has close to 5,000 Members primarily living in Nelson House, South Indian Lake, Thompson, Brandon and Winnipeg. The proposed Wuskwatim generating station is a 200-megawatt, low-head, hydroelectric plant to be built on the Burntwood River at Taskinigup Falls, approximately 45 kilometres southwest of Thompson and about 40 kilometres southeast of Nelson House.*

**For more information please contact Chief Jerry Primrose at (204) 679-0232**