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## CHIEFS OF ONTARIO

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CHIEFS OF ONTARIO REFUSE TO ABIDE BY NEW EDUCATION ACT AND DEMAND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ABANDON THE PROCESS

**Thunder Bay, ON (November 27, 2013)** — Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy and the First Nation leadership in Ontario are united in their rejection of the federal proposal on a First Nations Education Act and have announced plans to implement their own education vision through a direct action strategy which will be implemented in First Nation communities across the province.

“We discussed education at length over the last two days and along with maintaining our rejection of the federal legislation on education we also collectively affirm our inherent right to establish and control our own educational systems and institutions,” said Regional Chief Stan Beardy. “Additionally, we are developing a plan of action to assert our jurisdiction over education.”

First Nations in Ontario insist that federal and provincial governments align their respective laws, regulations and policies to conform to the jurisdiction of Indigenous Peoples.

“Our people have agreed that we must continue to assert our inherent jurisdiction over education by developing and implementing our own education laws and regulations which will lead to the establishment of our own education standards and systems,” said Grand Chief Gordon Peters who holds the education portfolio for the Chiefs in Ontario.

“First Nations in Ontario vowed to stop the federal First Nation Education Act and will refuse to abide by or implement the Act if it is unilaterally pushed through parliament. Action is currently underway garnering public and political support for our position. We continue developing strategies based on all available options including challenging resource extraction, direct action and litigation,” said Beardy.

The conservative government released the federal government document “A Proposal for a Bill on First Nation Education” in October. Prior to the public release of the proposal, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs stated to the National Chiefs Committee on education that he would not proceed with the act, if there was enough First Nation opposition.

“We have offered recommendations on how the consultation process could have been more meaningful for First Nations and on how we can be accommodated by coming to a common understanding of funding inequities prior to a proposal for a bill, and it has completely fell on deaf and unwilling ears,” said Beardy.

“Proposing bills and passing legislation before dialoguing on funding has never been acceptable to First Nations, nor will it ever be,” Peters added.

“There is never going to be a positive move forward in relations with Indigenous peoples in Canada if proposals for bills and legislation are rammed down our throats. This just isn’t going to fly with our youth, the very population the federal government purports to be doing this for.”

Beardy and Peters have called the proposal a major step backward and a springboard for a collision course with Indigenous Peoples that is being set up by the federal government.

*The Chiefs of Ontario is a political forum and a secretariat for collective decision making, action, and advocacy for the 133 First Nation communities located within the boundaries of the province of Ontario, Canada.*

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