



BEAVER LAKE CREE NATION

Press Release

EMBARGOED – 11:30 a.m., May 14, 2008

Beaver Lake Cree Nation Draws a Line in the (Oil) Sand

Lac La Biche, Alberta, May 14, 2008 - Beaver Lake Cree Nation, a small Cree band from north eastern Alberta, has watched with growing anger and frustration as their traditional hunting, trapping and fishing lands have been rapidly destroyed by the oil and gas industry. They have seen the forests they depend on for their livelihood riddled with oil wells, criss-crossed with roads and seismic lines and emptied of wildlife. They have seen their constitutionally protected rights disregarded and the local environment degraded. And today Beaver Lake Cree Nation says “Enough!”

Beaver Lake has filed a court case aimed at halting the wholesale destruction of their traditional hunting, trapping and fishing areas.

“The Governments of Canada and Alberta have made a lot of promises to our people and we intend to see those promises kept,” said Chief Al Lameman. “Governments and industry ignore our concerns. This is our home. This is where we live. We have a responsibility to our children, and to our children’s children, to see that the lands where the Cree live, and will always live, remain inhabitable.”

Legal papers filed in the Edmonton Registry by BLCN’s legal counsel, Jack Woodward, claim that Alberta and Canada have infringed Beaver Lake’s Treaty rights by approving oil and gas and other developments throughout the First Nation’s core traditional territory. Attached to the statement of claim is a schedule listing more than **15,000** asserted infringements of Beaver Lake’s constitutionally protected rights.

“A legal action is the only way to make our voices heard,” reported Chief Lameman.

The Beaver Lake Cree Nation’s reserve is located in the heart of Alberta’s popular vacation region, the Lakeland District. The reserve, and the Nation’s traditional hunting, fishing and trapping lands have been surrounded and inundated in recent years by encroaching oil and gas activities. Damage to wildlife habitat areas has been devastating and irreparable.

Beaver Lake’s ancestors adhered to Treaty 6, a numbered treaty including lands in central Alberta and Saskatchewan. At the time of signing, Beaver Lake’s ancestors were assured that the newcomers “would not interfere with [their] daily life” and that they would be able to continue making their living from hunting, trapping and fishing.

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