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PRESS RELEASE

The James Bay Cree Nation commences lawsuit in Ontario Superior Court, for recognition of Aboriginal title and Aboriginal rights in northern Ontario

[March 7, 2016 / NEMASKA, EEYOU ISTCHEE (Quebec)] - The James Bay Cree Nation has commenced an action in the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario, to obtain recognition of the Cree Nation's Aboriginal title and Aboriginal rights over its traditional territory in northern Ontario, Eeyou Istchee - Ontario. The lawsuit, filed against the governments of Canada and Ontario, seeks declarations of Aboriginal title (on a shared basis with other Aboriginal nations) and Aboriginal rights over approximately 48,000 square kilometres of lands located south of James Bay and immediately west of the Ontario-Quebec boundary. In addition, the lawsuit claims damages of \$495 million for past breaches of the Cree Nation's rights in relation to these lands.

"This action is the latest chapter in the Cree Nation's long struggle to ensure that our pre-existing rights over all of our traditional lands are properly respected", said Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon Come, the lead representative plaintiff in the lawsuit. "The imposition of the Ontario-Quebec boundary cut through our homeland of Eeyou Istchee. Our people have used, occupied, governed and protected these lands in Ontario since time immemorial, but our rights in these lands have never been addressed in any treaty."

The Cree Nation's action in the Ontario Superior Court is the continuation of claims that were first commenced by the Cree Nation against the federal government in the Federal Court of Canada in 1989, in a case known as *Coon Come No.* 3. In July 2015, the Federal Court ruled that the Cree Nation's claims relating to Ontario lands had to be pursued in the Ontario Superior Court.

"I am proud to be part of this next step in the Cree Nation's fight for the full recognition and fulfillment of our rights over our entire traditional territory," Grand Chief Coon Come continued. "Our people are committed to advancing and defending our rights in Ontario, despite the provincial boundaries that have been imposed upon us."

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