



**For Immediate Release**

## **Bell Canada failing First Nation customers**

UOI OFFICES (Nov. 24, 2010) – Hundreds of First Nations telephone customers across Ontario are complaining about service providers failing to follow government direction to refund the provincial sales tax portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax.

“They don’t have any problem finding the cheques we send them to deposit in their big corporate bank account,” said Anishinabek Deputy Grand Chief Glen Hare. “But they seem to misplace our citizens’ requests for their lawful refund of the 8 per cent PST that is still on their telephone bills.”

Hare said he had heard horror stories from homeowners in the 40 Anishinabek Nation communities across Ontario who have spent hours on the phone trying to have Bell Canada, one of Canada’s largest corporations, delete the PST from monthly phone, internet and satellite bills.

After the Ontario government directed businesses in the province to comply with directives to honour First Nations treaty rights to exemption from the 8 per cent PST portion of the new 13 per cent HST, Bell Canada asked First Nations customers to send copies of their certificates of Indian Status and a refund form to FAX number 1-877-338-3013 and using the request form <http://support.bell.ca/Documents/General/Other/taxexempt%28en%29.pdf?ver=7.0>

But complaints are flooding in about lack of response to the requests and poor customer service from Bell Canada. First Nations citizens are being told the forms can’t be located and they will have to re-submit the information.

“Maybe if they were paying rent for all those poles on our territories the phone companies would pay more attention to First Nation customer service,” said Deputy Grand Chief Hare. “We’re looking for Bell Canada to issue a public apology to our citizens and start obeying the law.”

All telecommunications for First Nations citizens in Ontario were to be PST exempt starting September 1, 2010. This includes phone, cell phone, internet, cable and satellite services.

The Anishinabek Nation established the Union of Ontario Indians as its secretariat in 1949. The UOI is a political advocate for 40 member communities across Ontario, representing approximately 55,000 people. The Union of Ontario Indians is the oldest political organization in Ontario and can trace its roots back to the Confederacy of Three Fires, which existed long before European contact.

**For more information contact:**



Marci Becking  
Communications Officer  
Union of Ontario Indians  
Phone: (705) 497-9127 (ext. 2290)  
Cell: (705) 494-0735  
E-mail: [becmar@anishinabek.ca](mailto:becmar@anishinabek.ca)  
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