SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
DECEMBER 8, 9 & 10, 2009, OTTAWA, ON

Resolution no. 54/2009

TITLE:	Support for High Speed Broadband Internet Connection in all First Nations Communities
SUBJECT:	Communications, Infrastructure, and Economic Development
MOVED BY:	Chief Adam Fiddler, Sandy Lake First Nation, Ontario
SECONDED BY:	Chief Titus Tait, Sachigo First Nation, Ontario
DECISION:	Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

A. Since the late 1990s, the Government of Canada, through Industry Canada, has been connecting rural and remote communities to the internet. As of October, 2009, 82 per cent of all Canadian households now have internet connection.

B. In August, 2009, Industry Canada announced it was planning next steps to expand broadband internet access to unserved and underserved communities throughout Canada.

C. Industry Canada also recognized that reliable broadband access will make it easier for Canadians in rural communities to take advantage of distance learning, telehealth, and online business opportunities, and the particular importance of broadband access to those who live in remote areas where local services are limited.

D. Internet access has also become a tool of social empowerment for youth in Canada and world-wide, thus contributing in some way to a reduction in the high suicide rates that still plague many First Nation communities.

E. Approximately 50 percent of all First Nations communities do not have access to high speed internet.

F. One such area that lacks high speed service are the 27 northern First Nation communities that occupy approximately one-third of the land mass of Ontario.

G. Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) KNET, in partnership with Bell Alliant, has submitted an $85 million proposal to connect at least 25 communities to a fibre optic cable network.

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H. Bell Aliant has committed $21 million towards the project, with the remaining $64 million to be funded by the province and federal governments.

I. Reliable, high speed internet access for these 27 northern Ontario communities will support community efforts to engage in the 21st century world of e-learning, e-health, and e-government.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

1. Support the KO-KNET/Bell Aliant project proposal.
2. Urge the federal, provincial and territorial governments to work with First Nation communities across Canada to ensure their access to high speed internet.
3. Insist that the Government of Canada include First Nation communities in current and future infrastructure funding programs.

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