ANISHINABEK NATION E'DBENDAAGZIJIG NAAKNIGEWIN

REVISED DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

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DRAFT

PREAMBLE

Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe (*One Anishinaabe Family*)

Debenjiged gii'saan anishinaaben akiing giibi dgwon gaadeni mnidoo waadiziwin.
(*Creator placed the Anishinabe on the earth along with the gift of spirituality*).

Shkode, nibi, aki, noodin, giibi dgosdoonan wii naagdowendmang maanpii shkagmigaang.
(*Here on mother earth, there were gifts given to the Anishinabe to look after, fire, water, earth, and wind*).

Debenjiged gii miinaan gechtwaa wendaagog Anishinaaben waa naagdoonjin ninda niizhwaaswi kino maadwinan.
(*The Creator also gave the Anishinabe seven sacred gifts to guide them. They are*):

Zaagidwin, Debwewin, Mnaadendmowin, Nbwaakaawin, Dbaadendiziwin, Gwekwaadziwin miinwa Aakedhewin.
(*Love, Truth, Respect, Wisdom, Humility, Honesty, and Bravery*).

Debenjiged kiimiingona dedbinwe wi naagdowendiwin.
(*Creator gave us sovereignty to govern ourselves*).

Ka mnaadendanaa gaabi zhiwebag miinwaa nango megwaa ezhwebag, miinwa geyaabi waa ni zhiwebag.
(*We respect and honour the past, present and future*).

Anishinabek Nation Declaration on E'Dbendaagzijig

Debenjiged gii'saan anishinaaaben akiing giibi dgwon gaadeni mnidoo waadiziwin.
(Creator placed Anishinaabe on earth along with gift of spirituality.)

Debenjiged kiimiingona dedbinwe wi naagdowendiwin.
(Creator gave us sovereignty to govern ourselves.)

Debenjiged kiimiingona E'Dbendaagzijig wi naaknigewag wi namaadziwag.
(We belong to the land and follow our own laws.)

Debenjiged kiimiingona gshkewiziwin wii-mkwenmangidwaa E'Dbendaagzijig.
(We have the right to determine who our people are.)

Dedbinwe gwa ggii-gkenmaanaanik E'Dbendaagzijig.
(Through our own governance principles and structures we decide who belongs.)

Kina kowaabindaamin shkakmikong, nibi, noodin, shkode, miinwaa kina bemaadziimgak miinwaa ezhi-nawendaasying.
(Together, all of us, we take care of each other, earth, water, air, fire, and all our relations.)

Mshkogaabwitownaanh gaa-miingwewiziying wi naagdawendizowin, wii-mnaadenmangid shkakmikwe miinwaa E'Dbendaagzijig, e-kidoomgak gaa-kidwaad nishnaabek naaknigewining gaa-zhibiigaadegiba – niizhing mdaaswaak-shi-nchwaaswi**.**

(We assert and exercise our inherent right of self-determination for the protection of our lands, and our E'Dbendaagzijig as affirmed by the Anishinabek Nation E'Dbendaagizig Naaknigewin, 2009.)

Statement of Authority

The ***Anishinabek Nation E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin (2009)*** is a living law of the Anishinabek Nation. It is grounded in Anishinaabe law as expressed in **Ngo *Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe (2011), Anishinabek Nation Chi-Naaknigewin (2012);*** *and the* ***Anishinabek Nation Declaration on E'Dbendaagzijig (2025).***

Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe is the ***Preamble of the Anishinabek Nation Chi-Naaknigewin***. The ***Anishinabek Nation Chi-Naaknigewin*** was ratified through **The Pipe Ceremony** at the 2012 Anishinabek Grand Council Assembly, also known as the Anishinabek Grand Council Fire.

The ***Anishinabek Nation Declaration on E'Dbendaagzijig (2025)*** was confirmed through **The Pipe Ceremony** at the 2025 **Anishinabek Grand Council Fire**. The Declaration and the ***Anishinabek Nation E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin (2009)***, were integrated into the **Anishinabek Nation Bundle** as a **Sacred Scroll**.

Definitions

In this Law,

"Adoption" means the permanent establishment of a familial relationship in accordance with:

a) Anishinaabe customary law or another applicable Indigenous legal order; and/or
b) Applicable provincial, territorial, or federal law.

Adoption includes the customary adoption of a child or an adult where that adoption is recognized by Elders who come forward to affirm that the adoption took place in accordance with Anishinaabe Law.

"**Anishinaabe Law"** means the living laws, legal orders, principles, reciprocal relationships, processes, ceremonies, teachings, customary practices, and systems of governance of the Anishinaabe Peoples.

"Anishinabek" refers the spelling of used in the formal name of the Anishinabek Nation.

"Central Registry" means the official record maintained by the Anishinabek Nation containing prescribed information about persons whose recognition as E'Dbendaagzijig has been confirmed by an Anishinabek First Nation.

"Citizenship Office" means the office established or designated by the Anishinabek Nation to administer the Central Registry and perform the functions assigned under this Naaknigewin.

"**Clan**" means families in reciprocal relationship with their more-than-human relatives: Hoof Clan, Bird Clan, Crane Clan, Fish Clan, Loon Clan, Bear Clan, and Maarten Clan and others that may be present and recognized within Anishinaabe communities

"Council Fire" means a traditional Anishinaabe gathering or decision-making process convened in accordance with Anishinaabe the laws, protocols, customs, and procedures. A Council Fire is a First Nation community meetings, Clan Councils, Confederacy Councils, Treaty Councils, or Anishinabek Nation Grand Councils, and others that may arise and recognized within Anishinaabe communities. Other Anishinabek Council Fires are B'Maakonigan, the Kinomaadswin Education Body, and Koganasowin.

"Commissioner on E'Dbendaagzijig" means the person appointed or recognized under Anishinabek Nation law to perform the functions assigned to the Commissioner under this Naaknigewin.

"Descendant[1]" means a person who traces their ancestry to an Ancestor or a member of one of the Doodemaag (Clans/Families) associated with Anishinabek First Nations, Treaties, and their territories. Descendants include a person whose ancestral relationship was established through adoption as defined in this Naaknigewin;

"**Doodem/pl. Doodemaag**" means a Clan of Anishinaabe Families recognized in Anishinaabe law, and recorded in oral histories, historical records, genealogies, customs or traditions of the First Nation;

"**E'Dbendaagoz"** means a person recognized under this Naaknigewin as "One Who Belongs.";

"E'Dbendaagzijig" means the persons collectively recognized as "Those Who Belong.";

"**First Nation Law**" means the law recognized by the Anishinabek First Nation

"Indian status" means registration as an Indian under the *Indian Act,* as amended.

"**Naaknigewin"** means law

"Registrar" means the person authorized by an Anishinabek First Nation to confirm, record, or communicate recognition of its E'Dbendaagzijig for the purposes of the Central Registry.

Vision

The purpose of this ***Anishinabek Nation E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin*** is to protect and safeguard the Anishinabek, a Nation of People, One Anishinaabe Family, for all time.

The Anishinabek Nation reflects unity among autonomous Anishinabek First Nation communities. These First Nations' E'Dbendaagzijig are connected through shared territory, identity, language, spirituality, law, history, culture, governance, and the Clan System.

This Naaknigewin honours both the unity of the Anishinabek Nation and the prerogative of each Anishinabek First Nation community to determine its E'Dbendaagzijig.

[Future Clause] This Anishinabek Nation E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin was adopted by The Pipe Ceremony at the Anishinabek Grand Council Fire held at (place), on (date of adoption).

[1] Note: Similar to how Dr. Alan Ojiig Corbiere spoke about the Anishinaabe clan system expanding when people from other clans were adopted into the nation, descendancy is a malleable concept that can expand based on the political decision of a family/community to adopt a child or an adult into the nation.
As mentioned in s.3.3 of the Anishinabek Nation E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin, adoption is included in the legal concept of descendant.
The Cornell Law School defines descendant to include adoption:
"A descendant is a person born in a direct biological line. For example, a person's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren are their descendants. In legal writing, the term "descendant" can have multiple meanings, including those who have been adopted as well as those who are descendants through lineal consanguinity. A person's stepchildren or the stepchildren of the person's descendants are not regarded as "descendants."

Nature and Application of this Law

This Naaknigewin is an exercise and expression of the inherent jurisdiction and laws of the Anishinabek concerning identity, kinship, belonging and citizenship.

It recognizes the jurisdiction of an Anishinabek First Nation to determine its own E'Dbendaagzijig, in accordance with its laws, traditions, and governance processes.

Recognition as E'Dbendaagzijig under Anishinaabe law is distinct from registration as a status Indian or any entitlements under the *Indian Act* unless a provision expressly states otherwise.

Articles

ARTICLE 1. ANISHINAABE CREATION STORY (AADIZOOKONAAN)

1.1 Anishinaabe creation stories tell how the world was created and recreated. They ground this Naaknigewin in Anishinaabe worldview and remind us that Anishinabek are a Nation of People connected through creation, spirit, land, kinship, and shared gifts.

2.1 The Anishinaabeg Creation Story as told by Basil Johnston in Ojibway Heritage, 1987:

Kitche Manitou (The Great Spirit) beheld a vision. In this dream he saw a vast sky filled with stars, sun, moon, and earth. He saw an earth made of mountains and valleys, islands and lakes, plains and forests. He saw trees and flower, grasses and vegetables. He saw walking, flying, swimming, and crawling beings. He witnessed the birth, growth, and the end of all things. At the same time he saw other things live on. Amidst change there was constancy. Kitche Manitou heard songs, wailings, stories. He touched wind and rain. He felt love and hate, fear and courage, joy and sadness. Kitche Manitou meditated to understand his vision. In his wisdom Kitche Manitou understood that his vision had to be fulfilled. Kitche Manitou was to bring into being and existence what he had seen, heard, and felt.

Out of nothing, he made roci, water, fire, and wind. Into each one he breather the breath of life. On each he bestowed with his breath a different effence and nature. Each substance had its own power which became its soul-spirit.

From these four substances Kitche Manitou created the physical world of sun, stars, moon, and earth.

To the sun Kitche Manitou gave the powers of light and heat. To the earth he gave growth and healing; to the waters purity and renewal; to the winds must and the breath of life itself.

On earth Kitche Manitou formed mountains, valleys, plains, islands, lakes, bays, and rivers. Everything was in its place; everything was beautiful.

Then Kitche Manitou made the plant beings. These were four kinds: flowers, grasses, trees, and vegetables. To each he gave a spirit of life, growth, healing, and beauty. Each he placed where it would be the most beneficial, and to lend to earth the greatest beauty and harmony and order.

After plants, Kitche Manitou created animal beings conferring on each special powers and natures. There were two-leggeds, four-leggeds, wingeds, and swimmers.

Last of all he made man. Though last in the order of creation, least in order of dependence, and weakest in bodily powers, man had the greatest gift – the power to dream.

Kitche Manitou then made The Great Laws of Nature for the well being and harmony of all things and creatures. The Great Laws governed the place and movement of sun, moon, earth and stars; governed the powers of wind, water, fire, and rock; governed the rhythm and continuity of life, birds, growth, and decay. All things lived and worked by these laws.

Kitche Manitou had brought into existence his vision.

ARTICLE 2. USING OUR GIFTS

2.1 We are instructed to use our Gifts:

2.1.1 To honour the gifts given by the Creator and to exercise our sovereignty;

2.1.2 To keep our language and traditions alive and to respect and honour our ancestors and descendants.

2.1.3 To support the recognition of descendants of our Clans and Families who have maintained kinship and relationships with Clans and Families, and ancestral lands as E'Dbendaagzijig, and to provide opportunities for them to use their gifts, to be included and to be heard;

2.1.4 To support descendants of our Clans those Families who have been separated from their ancestral lands and communities as a result of Canada's colonial laws, policies, and practices, including policies of control and extinguishment, in restoring their relationship with their Clans, Families, ancestral lands and communities;

2.1.5 To care for Anishinabek in accordance with the *Anishinabek Nation Chi-Naaknigewin* (2012) and *Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe*.

ARTICLE 3. PRINCIPLES OF ANISHINAABE E'DBENDAAGZIJIG NAAKNIGEWINUN (LAWS OF BELONGING)

3.1 Every person brought into a Clan through birth or adoption belongs to that Clan.

3.2 Recognition as Anishinaabe E'Dbendaagzijig is based on a person being recognized through one Anishinaabe parent recognized as E'Dbendaagoz.

3.3 Anishinaabe individuals belong to the Anishinaabe Father's Clan and use those Clan Gifts to fulfill responsibilities. If the father does not have a Clan or does not know their Clan, the Marten Clan may adopt the individual.

3.4 Descendancy and belonging may also be understood through a person's Anishinaabe mother, her clan, and her family relationships. These relationships are recognized and respected.

3.5 The Clan and Family take precedence over the individual.

3.6 Clan belonging carries Gifts and responsibilities to acknowledge, respect, and care for our Clan Brothers and Sisters, across Turtle Island.

3.7 All E'Dbendaagzijig are equal in dignity and belonging. Anishinaabe law and traditions recognize the gifts, roles, and responsibilities assigned by the Creator to Anishinaabe men, Anishinaabe women, and Two-Spirited Anishinabek.

3.8 Anishinaabe E'Dbendaagzijig Laws recognize equality and inclusion of all genders in Anishinaabe economic, social, and political life to ensure safety and well-being.

3.9 Marten Clan adoption or maternal recognition, and other processes recognized under Anishinaabe law support belonging with non-binary, blended, adoptive, assisted reproduction, matriarchal, and/or evolving family structures.

3.10 Individuals shall be E'Dbendaagoz if the meet the criteria outlined in this law regardless of whether they Indian status or not.

ARTICLE 4. LEGAL INTERPRETATION

4.1 The Anishinabek Nation does not accept colonial narratives, whether expressed through law, policy, or otherwise, that are unilaterally created or imposed in a manner that denies or diminishes Anishinabek sovereignty, inherent rights, and Treaty rights.

4.2 This Naaknigewin is not interpreted as accepting the authority of Canadian colonial laws or policies to determine who belongs to the Anishinabek Nation or to an Anishinabek First Nation.

4.3 The authority expressed through this Naaknigewin comes from the Creator and is exercised in accordance with Anishinaabe Law.

4.4 Any words or phrase written in Anishinaabemowin shall be understood according to their meaning within the Anishinaabemowin language. Where an Anishinaabemowin word or phrase differs in meaning from its English or French translation, the Anishinaabemowin meaning takes precedence.

4.5 The Anishinaabe E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewinun are to be interpreted according to Anishinaabe worldview, knowledge, legal traditions, and oral traditions.

4.6 The Appendices are provided for information and guidance and do not form part of the Anishinabek Nation E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin.

ARTICLE 5. RELATIONSHIP OF LAWS

5.1 Each Anishinabek First Nation has the authority to determine its own E'Dbendaagzijig in accordance with its laws, legal traditions, and governance processes.

5.2 In matters concerning the determinations of an Anishinabek First Nation's E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin, the Naaknigewinun of the Anishinabek First Nation take precedence within the Anishinabek Nation's Naaknigewinun and processes[2].

5.3 The Anishinabek Nation recognizes a person as E'Dbendaagoz when that person is recognized by Anishinabek First Nation in accordance with its laws and processes.

ARTICLE 6. ANISHINABEK NATION REGISTRY AND CITIZENSHIP OFFICE

6.1 The Anishinabek Nation may establish and maintain a central registry of E'Dbendaagzijig recognised by Anishinabek First Nations.

6.2 A person may be entered in the central registry upon confirmation of their recognition as E'Dbendaagzijig by the registrar or other authorized representative of an Anishinabek First Nation.

6.3 The central registry may be used to support the issuance of citizenship or official Anishinabek Nation documents such as passports.

6.4 The central registry may affirm the citizenship of an individual in writing upon request of that individual.

6.5 The Citizenship Office shall protect the confidentiality and security of personal information held in the central registry. Information may be collected, used, or disclosed only for an authorized purpose and in accordance with applicable Anishinabek Nation laws and policies.

6.6 The duties of the Citizenship Office may include communication of notices supporting the safety and security of E'Dbendaagzijig, subject to applicable privacy and confidentiality requirements.

[2] Section 5.2 means that a) citizenship in the Anishinabek Nation is solely determined by citizenship at the First Nation, and b) the First Nations are free to determine citizenship using a variety of approaches per the proposed "Framework of First Nation Laws of Belonging" document. Overall, the E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin does not take a cookie-cutter approach to citizenship law development, or citizenship itself. However, it does recognize the paramountcy of Laws given by the Creator.

ARTICLE 7. AMENDMENTS

7.1 In accordance with the formula noted in Article 7, this Anishinabek Nation E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin may be amended as proposed by:
   a. an Anishinabek First Nation;
   b. the Commissioner on E'Dbendaagzijig; or
   c. an established Anishinabek Nation Advisory Council.

7.2 A proposed amendment shall be presented at the Anishinabek Nation Grand Council for consideration and may be adopted by an Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Resolution.

7.3 The Commissioner on E'Dbendaagzijig may make technical amendments to correct spelling, grammar, numbering, or formatting, provided that the amendments do not change the substance or legal effect of this Naaknigewin.

7.4 The Commissioner shall report the minor technical amendments in writing to the Anishinabek Nation Grand Council.

Appendices

A. Anishinaabe First Nation E'Dbendaagzijig Laws: Draft Template

B. Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin, 2012.

C. Addendum to the Anishinabek Nation Declaration on E'Dbendaagzijig, 2025 – United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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