



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #AK-21-010

**TITLE: Support Southeast Tribes' Request To Reinstate The Roadless Rule For The Tongass National Forest, And Support Of The Tribes' Administrative Procedures Act Petition To Create A Separate Traditional Homelands Conservation Rule**

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**PRESIDENT**  
**Fawn R. Sharp**  
*Quinalt Indian Nation*

**1ST VICE PRESIDENT**  
**Aaron Payment**  
*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians*

**RECORDING SECRETARY**  
**Juana Majel-Dixon**  
*Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians*

**TREASURER**  
**Shannon Holsey**  
*Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians*

### REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

**ALASKA**  
**Rob Sanderson, Jr.**  
*Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*

**EASTERN OKLAHOMA**  
**Norman Hildebrand**  
*Wyandotte Nation*

**GREAT PLAINS**  
**Larry Wright, Jr.**  
*Ponca Tribe of Nebraska*

**MIDWEST**  
**Rebecca Crooks-Stratton**  
*Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community*

**NORTHEAST**  
**Tina Abrams**  
*Seneca Nation of Indians*

**NORTHWEST**  
**Leonard Forsman**  
*Suquamish Tribe*

**PACIFIC**  
**Erica Rae Macias**  
*Cahuilla Band of Indians*

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN**  
**Mark Pollock**  
*Blackfeet Nation*

**SOUTHEAST**  
**Nancy Carnley**  
*Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama*

**SOUTHERN PLAINS**  
**Robert Tippeconnie**  
*Comanche Nation*

**SOUTHWEST**  
**Joe Garcia**  
*Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo*

**WESTERN**  
**Amber Torres**  
*Walker River Paiute Tribe*

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**Dante Desiderio**  
*Sappony*

**NCAI HEADQUARTERS**  
1516 P Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.466.7767  
202.466.7797 fax  
www.ncai.org

**WHEREAS**, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, Tribal Nations of Alaska's southeast region are federally recognized Indian Tribes under federal law and these Tribal Nations' traditional territory includes lands within and around the Tongass National Forest; and

**WHEREAS**, protection of the inherent right to harvest and use Tribal traditional and customary foods requires careful cultural stewardship and protection of Tribal traditional environmental and natural resources; and

**WHEREAS**, indigenous peoples' longstanding care of the ancestral lands now classified as "inventoried roadless areas" (IRA) and within the Tongass National Forest has been in place for millennia and these lands not only provide indigenous people with food, they essentially define who we are and where we come from; and

**WHEREAS**, inventoried roadless areas protect healthy watersheds which provide cold, clean water that has sustained Tribal ways of life since time immemorial and inventoried roadless areas contain many sacred sites integral to Tribal spiritual, religious, and traditional practices; and

**WHEREAS**, inventoried roadless areas conserve natural diversity and help ensure the continued protection of indigenous fish and wildlife habitat as it relates to our spiritual, social, nutritional, and ecological values; and

**WHEREAS**, given Southeast Alaska's cool wet weather, the amount of stored carbon in our intact old-growth forest and soils, the Tongass National Forest represents one of the highest carbon stores in the world and the conservation of intact inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass is essential for slowing down climate change throughout the world; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the State of Alaska's own economic experts, Tongass timber is uncompetitive because of permanent and fundamental changes in global timber markets, high labor costs, distance from markets, and less expensive substitutes and the Tongass timber industry represents less than one percent of today's jobs and earnings in Southeast Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, at hearings held across Southeast Alaska in 2000 on the proposed roadless rule, nearly 60 percent of the Southeast Alaskans who spoke at the hearings supported including the Tongass National Forest in the final roadless rule, and has only grown to upward of 80 percent to date; and

**WHEREAS**, any rule that weakens or eliminates Roadless Rule protections within Tribal traditional territory of the Tongass National Forest will substantially affect Southeast Tribes' inherent Tribal rights to traditional and customary uses of the land.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Tribal Nations enjoying customary and traditional uses of the Tongass National Forest strongly support lasting protection for inventoried roadless areas within the Tongass National Forest as provided in the 2001 Roadless Rule; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) supports the passage of the Roadless Area Conservation Act being considered in Congress; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI requests the Secretary of Agriculture to select the 'no-action alternative' as the preferred alternative in the Tongass National Forest, Alaska - Roadless Rulemaking process; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI requests the Secretary of Agriculture to favorably respond to the Southeast Alaska Tribes' Administrative Procedures Act Petition to create a separate Traditional Homelands Conservation Rulemaking process; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2021 Mid Year Conference of the National Congress of American Indians, held June 20, 2021 - June 24, 2021, with a quorum present.



---

Fawn Sharp, President

**ATTEST:**



---

Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary