



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PSP-09-085c

TITLE: **Opposing Mining Activity in Our Ancestral Hunting and Fishing Grounds**

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Tlingit

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, 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, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, Camp #13 has been serving the community, both Native and non-native, of Yakutat for nearly ninety years; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood are comprised of members whose historical and contemporary ties to Dry Bay run deep; and

WHEREAS, the Yakutat Forelands, particularly the Akwe and Dry Bay areas, are historical sites where villages and resting grounds for our ancestors are located; and

WHEREAS, this land is not only precious due to its historical significance for our clans but it is also important for our community's future generations; and

WHEREAS, the people of Yakutat care about the abundant fish and game resources in the Yakutat Forelands that our cultural identity and livelihoods of many community members depend on; and

WHEREAS, these lands are one of the last pristine salmon habitats; and

WHEREAS, we are concerned that development in this area would put our traditional foods and resources (commonly referred to as 'subsistence') seriously at risk; and

WHEREAS, traditionally, clans could not land canoes in another clan's territory without first obtaining permission; and

WHEREAS, even though there were public meetings on this particular issue we feel that federal legislation, such as the General Mining Law of 1872, would allow a company from another state to stake claims in our ancestral land without clans' permission; and

WHEREAS, we have serious questions about the premise that mining is the best use of public lands; and

WHEREAS, the Forelands might be public domain, but it is, and always will be, our ancestral homeland; and

WHEREAS, our traditional territories are currently managed by the U.S. Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we should have a strong influence over how these lands should be managed; and

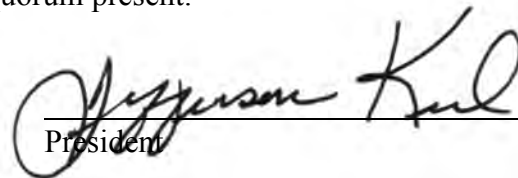
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we request the Forest Service take the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, Camp #13, voices into consideration with due diligence by allowing the Gunaaxoo Kwaans in particular to have a major say on any type of mining activity that is proposed to take place on our historical, cultural, medicines, hunting and fishing habitats; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, Camp #13, strongly opposes any mining activity to take place on our traditional hunting and fishing grounds, particularly in the Dry Bay area where there are ancestral and historical sites as well as sensitive burial grounds.

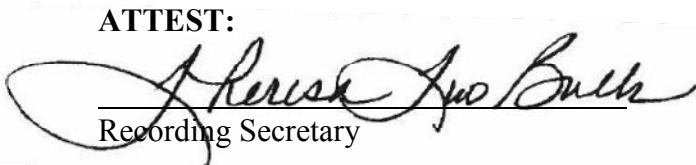
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2009 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Palm Springs Convention Center in Palm Springs, California on October 11-16, 2009, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:


Recording Secretary