



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #DEN-18-029

TITLE: Recognition of Washington Tribes' Climate Change Initiative

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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, forests, waters, wetlands, grasslands, and other natural landscapes are the foundation of all life, and they are the most affordable, effective, and proven tools for carbon sequestration and climate change resiliency; and

WHEREAS, climate change is an urgent practical and existential threat to ecosystems, the wildlife that inhabit them, and the human communities who rely on both for their physical and cultural survival; and

WHEREAS, local and nation legislation co-written by tribal leaders and experts that includes complex and integrative approaches to environmental co-management and recognition of tribal sovereignty – including the principle and mechanisms to carry out *free, prior, and informed consent*, especially in relation to consultation and government-to-government relations is beneficial to tribal nations and surrounding local and state communities; and

WHEREAS, Washington Initiative 1631, Carbon Emissions Fee Measure (I-1631) was formulated after an exhaustive six-month-long consultation process open to all Washington-State tribes, which took the form of dozens of meetings, negotiations, conference calls, summits, and briefings, assisted by thousands of electronic communications between tribes, their leaders, staff, and consultants; and

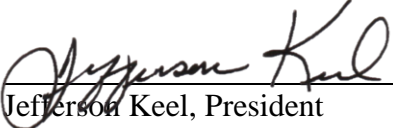
WHEREAS, I-1631 includes a robust, detailed, and serious effort to respect and honor tribal sovereignty and a meaningful consultation platform requiring “free, prior, and informed consent” for projects that impact tribal lands or sovereignty for tribes that have consultation rights in Washington State and even those affected tribes in neighboring states.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) recognizes the process leading to I-1631 represents a model for tribes to continue to express their status as sovereign entities and supports the continued co-management of the fight against climate change by tribal leaders, the continued empowerment of their voices in state, local, and national law making processes, and the fight for the political equality of all peoples; and

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 2018 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency in Denver, Colorado October 21-26, 2018, with a quorum present.


Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:


Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary