



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution # PDX-20-037

### TITLE: Protecting Rivers and Streams Impacting Tribal Rights and Resources

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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, 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**, water is sacred to many tribal cultures and tribal peoples have utilized water in their aboriginal territory for religious, hunting and fishing, and sustenance purposes since time immemorial; and

**WHEREAS**, habitat degradation of tribal nation's aboriginal territory has caused significant declines in fish stocks, fishing closures, threats to Orcas and other aquatic animals; and

**WHEREAS**, this habitat degradation presents a clear and present danger to tribal nations' livelihoods and traditions and shows the federal government's failure to uphold trust responsibilities and to protect the tribal nations' treaty-reserved rights; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI considers it critical to make every effort to preserve sacred, traditional, and ancestral, lands, waterways and fisheries; and

**WHEREAS**, there are hundreds of thousands of river miles in tribal regions that do not enjoy federal Wild and Scenic River protections; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress created the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, Wild and Scenic designations do not expand federal land, limit hunting or fishing, close any legally open roads or trails to vehicles, or affect access to or the use of private property; and

**WHEREAS**, federal legislation has been introduced to increase Wild and Scenic Rivers protections in Northern California, Washington and Oregon.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that NCAI supports passage of legislation that establishes additional Wild and Scenic Rivers designations as a means of preserving and protecting critical lands and waterways that are culturally, traditionally, and historically essential to tribal nations.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2020 Virtual Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held on November 8-13, 2020, with a quorum present.



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Fawn Sharp, President

**ATTEST:**



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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary