



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #LNK-12-005

TITLE: Support for Listing the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle as a Distinct Population Segment under the Endangered Species Act

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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, from time immemorial, the Bald Eagle has been vitally important to all Native American Tribes, Nations and Communities (“Tribes”) because of its cultural and spiritual significance; and

WHEREAS, the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle is indigenous to the Sonoran Desert in Arizona, and shares a homeland with Indian tribes in the area; and

WHEREAS, tribal elders, tribal resource managers, and tribal traditional ecological knowledge have documented a long history of decline in the numbers of Desert Nesting Bald Eagles living in the Sonoran Desert due to widespread habitat destruction and water depletion across Arizona over the last approximate 150 years; and

WHEREAS, today there are less than fifty (50) known breeding pairs of the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle left in the Southwest; and

WHEREAS, in Resolution #REN-08-034, the NCAI expressed support for the concerns of Arizona Tribes regarding the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle off the endangered species list under the Endangered Species Act; and

WHEREAS, for several years, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the San Carlos Apache Tribe, with the support and assistance of other Arizona Tribes, have worked tirelessly and submitted an unprecedented amount of traditional ecological and cultural knowledge encompassing the “best scientific evidence” about the Eagle to the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in order to demonstrate that the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle is entitled to be listed under the Endangered Species Act as a “distinct population” of Eagle in order to protect the Eagle population and its habitat for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Arizona Tribes’ position that the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle qualifies as a distinct population segment under the Endangered Species Act is also supported by almost every qualified scientist that has reviewed the question; and

WHEREAS, the loss of the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle would have an adverse impact on the larger populations of Eagles across the United States due to the Desert Nesting Bald Eagles’ diversity and specialized adaptations; and

WHEREAS, the loss of the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle would have a profound and irreparable impact on the health and wellbeing and the religious, traditional, and cultural practices of tribes in the Southwest United States.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support the continuing efforts of tribes to require the USFWS to recognize that the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle must be listed as a distinct population segment under the Endangered Species Act; 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 2012 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at The Cornhusker Hotel from June 17-20, 2012 in Lincoln, Nebraska, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary