



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MKE-17-013

TITLE: Supporting Tribal Parity in the 2018 Farm Bill

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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 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, the U.S. Congress is deliberating on the nature of food and agriculture policy for the nation and the world, as it must reauthorization the multi-year Farm Bill in 2018 which governs all farm programs, rural development, and nutrition initiatives within the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, agriculture is among the largest economic development industries in Indian Country, providing \$3.4 billion per year; and the policies that provide the framework for Indian Country's agriculture production constitute a large portion of the Farm Bill; and

WHEREAS, an overwhelming majority of the land throughout Indian Country is involved in agriculture production and many tribal citizens live in rural areas and communities where the cost of building or repairing basic infrastructure systems are often prohibitively high, and the 2018 Farm Bill will provide an authorization of federal funding for rural infrastructure initiatives; and

WHEREAS, tribal citizens and members in rural areas are often afflicted by poverty of place, wherein they are unable to find suitable employment to provide adequate income that supports good nutrition for their families; and thus, may rely on federal nutrition programs authorized in the Farm Bill; and

WHEREAS, even with the great strides made for Indian Country agriculture in previous Farm Bill negotiations, going virtually unmentioned in the 1990s to many thoughtful provisions scattered across all Titles, the \$3.4 billion generated annually through Indian ag efforts is still more than 99 percent raw commodities, instead of the healthy, local, economically beneficial, and nutritious food needed in Indian Country communities and rural areas; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 Farm Bill negotiations, resulting policies, and funding must continue to include and incorporate perspectives from Indian Country to afford parity, opportunity, and consistency under the federal food and agriculture laws, policies, and programs; and

WHEREAS, improving programs and funding for Indian Country will help to ensure Tribal governments have the ability to establish long-term plans and goals for their communities and the surrounding rural communities, and help Native farmers and ranchers continue to grow their food businesses and build tribal food systems to support our economies and communities; and

WHEREAS, in order to achieve parity, legislation, and funding for USDA programs and services should use tribal demographic data and statistics and directly fund tribal governments at the same level as states and counties for the delivery of programs specified in titles listed in the Farm Bill including, but not limited to, food and agriculture, rural development, conservation, nutrition, health, and education programs; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 Farm Bill effort being promoted by the Native Farm Bill Coalition is the best opportunity in decades for Indian Country to effectively create positive and truly relevant change in federal agriculture policy to enhance the development of Indian agriculture beyond raw commodities, support infrastructure, research, and education in tribal communities, and improve federal food nutrition programs in Indian Country while providing tribal governments the authority manage these programs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls upon the U.S. Congress to fulfill its federal trust responsibility to Indian Country during the development and negotiation of the 2018 reauthorization of the Farm Bill's policies to incorporate tribal parity, opportunity, and consistency throughout and encourage and support continued participation, development, and progress in Indian Country's agriculture businesses, food systems, infrastructure, and nutrition programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI collect Farm Bill recommendations from Tribal Nations to use in advocacy efforts in Congress. NCAI will engage with Tribal Nations and partner organizations to advocate for Tribal Parity in the Farm Bill; 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 2017 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, WI, Oct 15, 2017 - Oct 20, 2017, with a quorum present.



Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary