



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #REN-13-029

TITLE: Protecting Alaska Salmon for Subsistence

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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, since time immemorial, Alaska's tribes have hunted, fished, and gathered on the lands and waters of what is now the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's Chinook salmon is of critical importance to the spiritual, cultural, subsistence and community needs of Alaskan Natives; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's Chinook salmon support Alaska's commercial, charter and personal use fisheries; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's Chinook salmon runs have been declining for at least a decade; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's 2012 Chinook salmon runs were dramatically low, and disaster declarations were made for Upper Cook Inlet and the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's 2012 Chinook runs were also of concern in Kodiak, Chignik, Prince William Sound and Southeast Alaska rivers; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, economic losses to the State of Alaska's commercial, charter and recreational fisheries were over \$34,000,000; and

WHEREAS, significant effects on subsistence users and on the cultural and spiritual values of Alaskans is beyond economic assessment; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, subsistence fisheries in the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers were under severe restrictions and, despite those restrictions, many escapement goals were not met; and

WHEREAS, significant Chinook salmon stocks from Alaska are caught and discarded in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska pollock fisheries and other trawl fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Chinook salmon bycatch is a direct and controllable source of mortality for extremely valuable and declining salmon runs throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, the Chinook salmon bycatch caps for the Bering Sea pollock fishery is set at 60,000, and the Chinook salmon bycatch cap in the Gulf of Alaska pollock fishery is set at 25,000; and

WHEREAS, the other Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries, other than the pollock fishery, currently operate without any bycatch limits; and

WHEREAS, the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Chinook salmon bycatch allowance in the pollock trawl fisheries is more than 40% of the total catch of Chinook salmon in Southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has never demanded that the pollock fishery or the federal government comply with the protections set forth in ANILCA and stop catching Chinook Salmon in numbers that undermine the subsistence needs of Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS, Chinook salmon bycatch should be preserved and donated to food banks, shelters, churches, elders program, and native organizations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI requests the North Pacific Fishery Management Council take action to significantly reduce Chinook salmon bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea pollock trawl fisheries and to put meaningful and effective Chinook salmon bycatch reduction limits on Chinook bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska non-pollock trawl fisheries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI will work in good faith with the federally recognized tribes of Alaska and the US Congress to positively address and resolve the injustices enumerated in this Resolution in consultation with, and the support of, the Executive Office of the President of the United States; 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 2013 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Atlantis Casino from June 24 - 27, 2013 in Reno, Nevada with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary