



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution REN-08-017

### **TITLE: Opposing the Southern Nevada Water Authority Water Pumping Proposal**

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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 the Shoshone, Paiute, Goshute and Washoe Tribes have inhabited and used the lands in the Great Basin as their aboriginal lands; and

**WHEREAS**, the land and water comprising these aboriginal lands have been central to the culture and religion of the Great Basin Tribes and have purposefully lived in harmony with the plants and animals of our aboriginal lands in a delicate natural and spiritual balance; and

**WHEREAS**, the aboriginal lands continue to contain sites and natural features, including springs, seeps, wetlands and wet meadows, of great spiritual and cultural importance to the Great Basin Tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, the lands in the Great Basin are arid and water is the key to the natural integrity of those lands and the life forms they support, and key to the Great Basin Tribes cultural persistence and spiritual and economic survival; and

**WHEREAS**, the groundwater is almost the only, and by far the most essential, supply of water available to the Tribes, the farmers, hunters, ranchers and all residents of the neighboring communities, and the plant and animal life within the Great Basin; and

**WHEREAS**, the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) is has received approval from the Nevada State Water Engineer for a number of groundwater rights application in Spring Valley, Nevada and Snake Valley, Utah, with the intention of pumping as much groundwater as possible and piping it to the greater Las Vegas, Nevada area to support continued urban and suburban growth in that area; and

**WHEREAS**, SNWA's pending applications and groundwater development proposal would drain Spring and Snake Valley of all supposedly available groundwater in those valley's; and

**WHEREAS**, the Great Basin Tribes and their neighbors know that disrupting the hydrological and ecological system of our aboriginal lands, including Spring and Snake Valleys, will cause wide ranging groundwater problems and result in profoundly harmful and long lasting environmental, economic, cultural, and spiritual impacts on the people of the Great Basin and the surrounding communities in Nevada and Utah; and

**WHEREAS**, the people of the Great Basin, know from longstanding practical experience in this region that SNWA's proposed groundwater pumping and export would: (1) lower the groundwater table of the Great Basin Tribes aboriginal lands; (2) dry up the springs and wells that sustain the entire ecology and economy of those lands; and (3) severely and irreparably harm the human, animal, and plant communities of this region.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NCAI does hereby support the Tribes of the Great Basin in their endeavor to protect their aboriginal lands; and


**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the NCAI opposes the groundwater applications of the Southern Nevada Water Authority in Spring Valley, Snake Valley ; and other areas within and surrounding the aboriginal lands; and Great Basin; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the NCAI demand that the Nevada State Engineer respect the Great Basin Tribes right to continued physical, economic, cultural, and spiritual survival, and that the Nevada State Water Engineer recognize that SNWA's groundwater export applications and proposal would drain the aboriginal land, of the water necessary for their survival; 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 2008 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel and Casino in Reno, Nevada on June 1-4, 2008, with a quorum present.

  
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President**ATTEST:**  
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Recording Secretary