



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MSP-15-046

TITLE: NCAI Calls for the White House Council on Native American Affairs to Establish a Subgroup on Natural 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, NCAI's tribal leadership and membership have established natural resources as a nationwide priority that is central to tribal cultures, communities, and economies; and

WHEREAS, American Indians and Alaska Natives, as first stewards of this land, have nurtured, lived, and thrived off their homelands since time immemorial and Native peoples continue to rely on their natural resources to sustain themselves as key elements of their culture and subsistence; and

WHEREAS, natural resources provide foods, medicines, and materials that sustain our lifeways; and

WHEREAS, natural resources provide strong economies, cultural sustainability, and healthy human lifestyles for indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, through the United States Constitution, federal laws, and government-to-government agreements with tribal nations, the federal government has treaty and trust responsibilities to Indian tribes to protect, manage, preserve and allow access to tribes' natural resources; and

WHEREAS, tribal management of these resources is often affected by insufficient coordination and alignment of federal agency actions that impact these resources; and

WHEREAS, the White House Council on Native American Affairs (WHCNAA) was established by Executive Order 13647 with the goal to coordinate policy development and engagement with tribes and Native American communities; and

WHEREAS, the WHCNAA was established to ensure that the federal government engages in a true and lasting government-to-government relationship with tribes in a more coordinated and effective manner; and

WHEREAS, the WHCNAA offers the means to address the coordination and alignment of federal agencies such that the federal obligation to tribes to protect the natural resources is met; and

WHEREAS, one of the five pillars used to establish the WHCNAA is “protecting tribal lands, environments, and natural resources, and promoting respect for tribal cultures;” and

WHEREAS, there are five subgroups that address education, economic development, energy, environmental protection and climate change, and health but no subgroup has been formed to address all natural resources issues.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI calls for the creation of a natural resources subgroup of the White House Council on Native American Affairs (WHCNAA) that would focus on protecting tribal natural resources; and

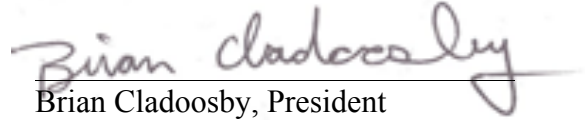
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI supports the efforts of the WHCNAA to protect all natural resources by developing and improving policy platforms that address natural resource issues identified by tribes, including those reserved by treaties, subsistence rights, and all natural resource rights and interests; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI encourages the WHCNAA to consult with tribes and tribal natural resources organizations to ensure that their trust responsibility to tribes is being met and that tribes’ treaty-reserved natural resources are being protected; 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 2015 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the St. Paul River Centre, St. Paul, MN, June 28 to July 1, 2015, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary