



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MKE-17-017

TITLE: In Support of the Tribal U.S. Border Priorities

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Jacqueline Pata
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, events arising from September 11, 2001 and beyond created the need to secure America's borders but failed to consider the tribal lands and territories that extend beyond the arbitrary borders placed throughout those lands; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, Canada Border Services Agency, and other U.S.-Canada agencies have not given adequate consideration to those tribal communities and citizens located along the Northern border; and

WHEREAS, on August 21, 2017, more than 70 participants attended a day-long Summit, with representation from 19 tribal leaders from both the United States and Canada to discuss concerns at the United States-Canada border; and

WHEREAS, tribal leaders shared the difficulties they face when crossing the border while touching on a number of contributing factors, such as the unwillingness of border agents to accept tribal government-issued identification documents, excessive interrogation and harassment, denial of entry for minor offenses, and the improper handling of sacred or cultural items; and

WHEREAS, all in attendance expressed a willingness to continue working cooperatively with American and Canadian border officials as partners in border security in a way that treats them as equal, yet sovereign governmental partners; and

WHEREAS, tribal leaders should coordinate efforts of tribal governments and First Nation's communities when addressing shared concerns at the United States-Canada border; and

WHEREAS, coordinated, immediate, and on-going engagement with both the United States and Canadian governments is necessary in the following areas:

1. Improvement of both United States and Canadian (including Alaska) border crossing policies and practices for tribal citizens;
2. Improvement of both United States and Canadian (including Alaska) border security training and recognition of tribal identification credentials;
3. Implementation of the Jay Treaty provisions in Canada governing border crossing for all tribal members and First Nations communities and removal of the 50 percent blood quantum requirement in the United States; and
4. Improvement in education and cultural sensitivity by border agents.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) does hereby support the efforts of northern border tribes to address concerns for border security and access along the U.S.-Canada border (including Alaska), and the NCAI will use practicable efforts to assist the northern border tribes in working with United States and Canadian governments to address tribal interests; 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 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