



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PSP-09-049

TITLE: Support for Environmental Protection Agency Indian General Assistance Program and Efforts to Strengthen its Effectiveness and Increase Funding

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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, the federal government has committed to honoring Tribal Treaty Rights and fulfilling its Trust Responsibility to American Indian Sovereign Nations in the context of government-to-government relationships; and

WHEREAS, Indian Tribal EPA regions serving tribes of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have developed productive and meaningful partnerships aided by EPA's Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (IGAP), resulting in enhanced capacity to manage and address the environmental issues, needs, and action within our region; and

WHEREAS, funding provided to tribes through IGAP has steadily decreased since FY 2004 while inflation has increased, and as a result, funding levels have effectively been greatly reduced to the point that many tribes cannot meet program needs; and

WHEREAS, the IGAP Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) recommendation is that EPA develop a "mechanism to support tribal program implementation" as opposed to maintaining that a legislative process is required; and

WHEREAS, IGAP should provide adequate funding capacity and authority to support both tribal and EPA needs and objectives in all EPA Regions serving Indian Tribes; and

WHEREAS, IGAP should provide an increase of funding and authority for all EPA Regions in order to serve tribal programs to better meet the needs of all tribes, of different sizes, facing different environmental issues, especially impact of climate change to tribal resources; and

WHEREAS, IGAP should allow maximum flexibility so that tribes can address their individual priorities while ensuring accountability for results.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby urge all EPA Regions to ensure that it has the financial and human resources to support the IGAP; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support significantly increasing IGAP funding levels so tribes can have both a vigorous and meaningful environmental presence in Indian Country and the capacity to effectively implement the programs developed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby encourage all EPA Regions to coordinate with tribes to transition tribal programs to address self-governing responsibilities and allow tribes to manage environmental programs as sovereign nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support implementation of a new, more flexible environmental program that is modeled after Bureau of Indian Affairs "638" and self-governance structures to provide program structure, funding, and authority for tribes to transition from self-determination to self-governance; and

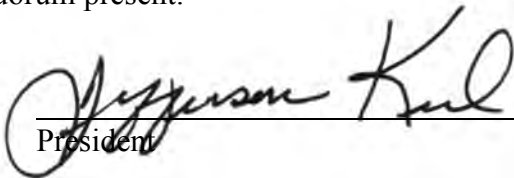
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support full use of the economic stimulus package to provide additional funds to the tribal set-aside programs under the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act state revolving funds by September 30, 2009; and

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 2009 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Palm Springs Convention Center in Palm Springs, California on October 11-16, 2009, with a quorum present.

ATTEST:



President



Recording Secretary