



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-11-072

TITLE: Supporting S. 1684, the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments

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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, American Indian and Alaska Native tribes have significant renewable energy resource capacity in the form of wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass, as well as significant tradition energy resources, and seek to establish sustainable economic development for tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, the primary obstacle to both renewable and traditional energy resource development on tribal lands has been delays and bureaucracy at the Department of Interior, particularly in its inability to conduct appraisals and approve leases in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, NCAI recognizes that energy efficiency is a core component of a sustainable energy program that can reduce both the amount and costs of energy consumption and raise the quality of life in Indian communities, and the NCAI strongly supports direct federal funding for increased funding for tribal energy efficiency programs; and

WHEREAS, after consultation with Indian tribes, Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming introduced S. 1684, titled above, which has been co-sponsored by Senators Akaka, McCain, Thune and Hoeven, and which would provide Indian tribes with the opportunity to remove some of the bureaucratic obstacles to energy leasing; and

WHEREAS, S. 1684 also provides a formula for direct federal funding of tribal weatherization programs, establishes a tribal priority for hydropower leasing, and includes Indian tribes in the Department of Interior's efforts on biomass; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI recognizes that the integration of the abundant tribal renewable resources into the national energy economy requires access and interconnection into the local distribution and regional transmission grids, particularly those that are owned and operated by the federal hydropower marketing administrations; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI supports the renewable energy tax incentive program and urges Congress to make these tax incentive tradable and assignable; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI strongly opposes the Department of Interior's unfair federal drilling permit fees (APD fees) as applied to tribal lands, which violate the federal trust responsibility and severely disadvantage tribal lands against competition from nearby state lands where the drilling fees are much lower.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI supports the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments (S. 1684) and urges Congress to pass the legislation after hearings and dialogue with tribal leaders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in any future legislation that addresses electricity transmission access, the NCAI urges Congress to include preferential tribal access and interconnection to the distribution and transmission system; and

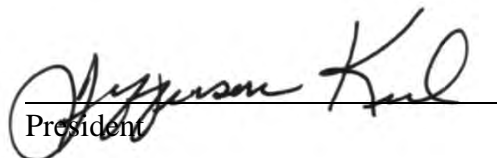
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI urges the passage of separate legislative provisions that would enable American Indian tribes to trade or assign tax credits from the production of renewable energy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI urges Congress, the Department of Interior, and the Appropriations Committees to remove or modify the unfair drilling permit fees (APD fees) that disadvantage energy development on tribal lands; 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 2011 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon on October 30 – November 4, 2011, with a quorum present.


President

ATTEST:


Recording Secretary