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THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

RESOLUTION #SD-02-075

Title: Support for a Project by National Tribal Environmental Council to Showcase Exemplary Tribal Environmental Protection Programs

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 and their way of life, 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, tribal governments across the country carry out environmental protection programs exercising their sovereignty for the benefit of all people within their reservations and future generations, as well as for the benefit of communities in neighboring jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, there is widespread support in the larger American society for environmental protection – people expect governments to perform regulatory programs to protect the environment; and

WHEREAS, within the larger American society there is a dearth of understanding about the sovereign status of tribal governments, and many of the people and groups that comprise the environmental movement tend to share in this lack of understanding; and

WHEREAS, since most people in the larger society lack an understanding about the sovereign status of tribal governments, they also generally do not

understand the nature of the threats to tribal sovereignty resulting from Supreme Court decisions over the last quarter century, as the Court has arrogated to itself the law-making role of Congress; and

WHEREAS, if more people in the larger society knew what Indian tribes and nations are doing as governments to protect the environment, such awareness could contribute to public support for federal legislation as part of the NCAI Tribal Sovereignty Protection Initiative; and

WHEREAS, the National Tribal Environmental Council (NTEC), in collaboration with the First Nations Environmental Law Program at Vermont Law School, is seeking support for a project to inform the general American public about what Indian tribes and nations are doing as governments to protect the environment by creating a showcase of exemplary tribal environmental programs; and

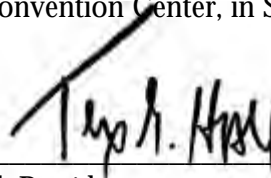
WHEREAS, this project will feature a range of methods to get information to the public, including the use of web sites, the publication of a book, magazine articles and journal articles, and efforts to attract attention from the mass media.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby endorse the efforts of the NTEC to secure financial assistance from appropriate sources to carry out a project to inform the general public about what Indian tribes and nations are doing as governments to protect the environment by creating a showcase of exemplary tribal environmental programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of the NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

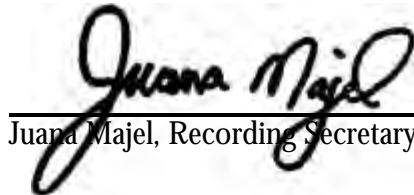
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2002 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Convention Center, in San Diego, California on November 10-15, 2002 with a quorum present.



Tex Hall, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel, Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 2002 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Convention Center, in San Diego, California on November 10-15, 2002.