



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #REN-19-024

TITLE: Staying Mineral Leasing and Paleontological Use Permitting in Areas of Tribal Interest, such as the Buffalo Strip and Ball Ranch Area of Critical Environmental Concern, Where Tribal Nations Do Not Consent

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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 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, from time immemorial Native people have resided in what is now the United States of America, and we have drawn sustenance from the land, practiced our traditions and religions which are tied to the land, and have stewarded this land; and

WHEREAS, we have continuing obligations to the land, and to our ancestors, our sacred sites, water, wildlife, plants, and traditional cultural landscapes which remain in lands known today as public lands; and

WHEREAS, to facilitate opening public lands for development and research, federal entities are expediting, streamlining, weakening, and potentially violating applicable federal law and policies concerning natural resources, environmental protection, cultural resources, and the federal trust responsibility owed to affected tribal nations; and

WHEREAS, despite outcry from affected tribal nations, many tribal cultural sites and ancestral lands are being aggressively leased and exploited without tribal consent for oil, gas, and minerals extraction and transmission, invasive and destructive recreation, and excavation of fossilized remains, which are cultural resources, as resolved by NCAI Resolution SD-15-020; and

WHEREAS, tribal cultural resources and ancestral homelands are threatened by mineral leasing and permitting for paleontological research – without the consent of affected tribal nations – in two areas in New Mexico known as the Buffalo Strip and the Ball Ranch Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); and

WHEREAS, legislation has been introduced to protect these parcels of ancestral tribal land; and

WHEREAS, despite pending legislative action and objections by impacted tribal nations, the Bureau of Land Management is aggressively moving forward to permit extractions of minerals in the Buffalo Strip and fossilized remains from the ACEC, which will result in destruction of vital cultural resources and landscapes.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that to prevent the destruction of traditional cultural resources, landscapes, and sacred sites, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) opposes mineral leasing and paleontological permitting activities on tribal ancestral lands where federal officials and private parties have failed to consult with tribal nations and have not received their free, prior, and informed consent; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI supports a stay on mineral leasing in the Buffalo Strip and paleontological use permitting in the Ball Ranch ACEC until tribal concerns are addressed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI supports actions by Congress which are intended to protect the two parcels of ancestral tribal lands known as the Buffalo Strip and the Ball Ranch Area of Critical Environmental Concern; and

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

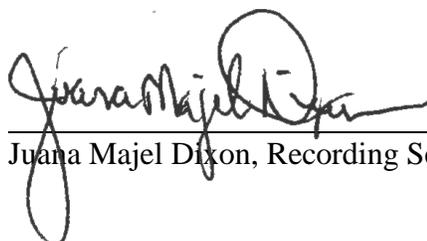
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2019 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Nugget Casino Resort, June 24-27, 2019, with a quorum present.



Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary