TITLE: Support for Indian Country Provisions and Passage of the Farm Bill

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 Farm Bill is multi-year legislation that governs an array of agricultural and food programs under the purview of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); and

WHEREAS, the 2008 Farm Bill, also known as The Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, expired on September 30, 2012; and legislative delays resulted in the failure to pass the 2012 Farm Bill; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-240) to extend all 2008 Farm Bill provisions until September 30, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the reauthorization or passage of a new Farm Bill sets national policy for agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and forestry; and

WHEREAS, the array of programs authorized and funded by the Farm Bill are of critical importance to all Americans; and

WHEREAS, the reconciliation of the Senate and House versions of the 2013 Farm Bill would ultimately lead to the establishment of national policy and authorizing funding levels for the next five-year period; and

WHEREAS, the enacted Farm Bill must contain policies and funding levels that fulfill the nation’s trust responsibility to tribes through enhancement and support of important opportunities in rural economic development, job creation, and energy; natural resources and agriculture; nutrition and health; youth, education including 1994 tribal land grant colleges and universities, and technical assistance and markets and exports; and
WHEREAS, the Farm Bill negotiations, and resulting policies and funding must include perspectives from Indian Country, so tribes and 1994 land grant colleges and universities are afforded parity, opportunity, and consistency under the law; and

WHEREAS, in order to achieve parity, legislation and funding for USDA programs and services should use tribal demographic data and statistics and directly fund tribal governments at the same level as states and counties for the delivery of programs specified in titles listed in the Farm Bill including, but not limited to, food and agriculture, conservation, nutrition, health, and education programs; and

WHEREAS, the Farm Bill should provide opportunity to Indian Country through Tribal support and incentive programs, as well as the establishment of a statutory requirement for the USDA to focus the provision of all USDA services and programs to Substantially Underserved Trust Areas; and

WHEREAS, program consistency and additional funding would help to ensure tribal governments have the ability to establish long-term plans and goals for their communities, through tribal-specific programs; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians calls upon the United States Congress to fulfill its federal trust responsibility to Indian Country in the Farm Bill; and incorporate parity, opportunity, and consistency into the Farm Bill to encourage and support continued participation, development, and progress in Indian Country; 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 2013 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Atlantis Casino from June 24 - 27, 2013 in Reno, Nevada with a quorum present.

[Signature]
President

[Signature]
Recording Secretary