



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SD-15-024

TITLE: Support for the *Tribal Climate Change Principles: Responding to Federal Policies and Actions to Address Climate Change* document and its Swift Implementation by the Federal Government

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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, Indigenous Peoples in the United States, including 567 federally-recognized tribes, are facing immediate and significant impacts from climate change and a growing body of literature illustrates the unique issues facing Indigenous Peoples from climate change, including: the recently developed *Primer on Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples; Guidelines for Considering Traditional Knowledges (TKs) in Climate Change Initiatives*; and the special issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Climatic Change*, “*Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples in the United States: Impacts, Experiences and Actions*;” and

WHEREAS, the federal government is beginning to acknowledge the disproportionate threats of climate change to Indigenous Peoples through administrative and congressional reports such as the 3rd National Climate Assessment and the *2014 President’s State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience* (Task Force); and

WHEREAS, federal action must be taken to support the efforts of Indigenous Peoples to adapt to climate change impacts and to reduce their carbon footprints through a range of mitigation approaches, including renewable energy development and energy efficiency, and provide Indigenous Peoples access to the financial and technical resources that are required to assess the impacts of climate change on their cultures, air, land and water, economies, community health, and ways of life; and

WHEREAS, adequate response to the threat of climate change requires action by tribal, federal, state, and local governments; and

WHEREAS, the federal government's treaty and trust responsibilities to protect Indian lands includes the duty to protect lands from the impacts of climate change, which requires that sufficient federal resources be equitably allocated to address climate change so Indigenous Peoples can engage effectively in adaptation and mitigation strategies that will help ensure the integrity of their cultures, homelands, infrastructures, and services; as well as enforce tribal treaty and reserved rights to both on- and off-reservation resources; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force led an effort to reach out to Indigenous leaders across the country to solicit their recommendations on how the federal government can better support their nations and communities in preparing for the impacts of climate change and proposed further federal and state consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples on all aspects of federal climate preparedness and resilience efforts; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force recommendations focus on inclusion and participation of Indigenous Peoples in federal climate change programs, including access to data, programs and federal funds; education; and long-term planning for natural resources and ecosystem health; water safety and security; housing infrastructure; and food and energy security; and

WHEREAS, many individual tribes, regional and national tribal organizations, and partner non-Native organizations recognized the need to develop a document identifying tribal specific principles and, to varying degrees, engaged in drafting, reviewing, and providing input to develop the "Tribal Climate Change Principles: Responding to Federal Policies and Actions to Address Climate Change," which sets forth eight principles to guide the federal government in the development and implementation of administrative and legislative actions related to Indigenous Peoples and climate change.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) supports the following eight principles of the *Tribal Climate Change Principles: Responding to Federal Policies and Actions to Address Climate Change* as a guiding policy for U.S. federal agencies and that all federal agencies actively engage NCAI and Indigenous Peoples in the United States in plans to implement these principles:

Strengthen Tribal Sovereignty in the Climate Change Era

1. Federally-recognized Tribes and other Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous communities must be partners with full and effective participation in assessing and addressing the problems of climate change at the local, regional, national, and international levels and must be accorded at least the status and rights recognized in the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international standards relevant to Indigenous Peoples.
2. Tribes must have fair and equitable representation on all federal climate committees, working groups, and initiatives in which states, local governments, and other stakeholders are represented.
3. The federal government should establish a high-level interagency Tribal government task force to examine and propose solutions to close gaps across the federal agencies' relationships and programs with Tribes, and to develop, recommend, and implement Tribal-specific solutions that enable the agencies to support and foster Tribal climate-resilient planning and investment.

Support Tribes Facing Immediate Threats from Climate Change

4. Indigenous Peoples must have direct, open access to funding, capacity-building, and other technical assistance, with their free, prior and informed consent, to address the immediate and long-term threats from climate change.

Ensure Tribal Access to Climate Change Resources

5. Tribes must have fair and equitable access to federal climate change programs.
6. Tribes must be made eligible for existing and future federal natural resource funding programs for which states are eligible, but from which Tribes are currently, or might be, excluded.
7. A fair and equitable set-aside of direct monies or allowances must be made available for distribution to Tribes through legislation, administrative actions, and existing and future federal natural resource funding programs.

Traditional Knowledges and Climate Change

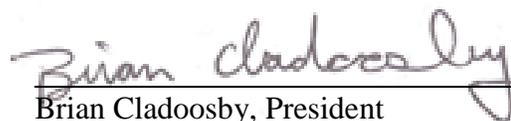
8. Indigenous traditional knowledges, with the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples, must be acknowledged, respected, and promoted in federal policies and programs related to climate change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI urges the United States government agencies, taskforces, and their partner organizations to comply with and implement the November 5, 2009, Executive Memo, Executive Order 13175, and Secretarial Order 3289, and partner with American Indians as sovereign nations as co-decision makers all policy, regulations and laws related to climate change on or off each nation's respected reservations, ceded lands and usual and accustomed areas; and

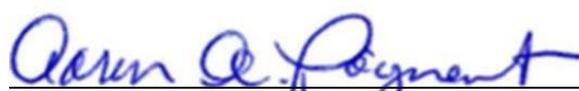
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2015 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Resort, San Diego, CA, October 18-23, 2015, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary