



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ATL-14-022

TITLE: Urging the Federal Government to Safeguard Tribal First Foods

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Jacqueline Johnson Pata
Tlingit

NCAI HEADQUARTERS

1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
202.466.7767
202.466.7797 fax
www.ncai.org

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 Indians and Alaska Natives since time immemorial have relied on our traditional foods to sustain us; they are a part of our history, culture and traditions; they are the basis for our way of life throughout the United States; and we are obligated to care for and protect them now and for the next seven generations and beyond; and

WHEREAS, many tribes are now calling these traditional foods the First Foods, which in some areas include water, fish, big game, plants, roots, and berries; we recognize that other areas have different, unique First Foods based on their history, culture and traditions; and

WHEREAS, the First Foods are both natural and cultural resources, critical to tribal history and today's life, culture and traditions that include teaching and learning, harvest, preparation, consumption, tribal celebrations, sharing, and economics; and

WHEREAS, tribal people are more profoundly affected by the loss of or damage to the First Foods because of their crucial importance, the fundamental position they have always held in our lives, and our greater reliance on them than the average non-indigenous population; and

WHEREAS, a clean, healthy environment (including land, air and water), with intact, fully-functioning ecological and physical processes is essential to support and maintain the First Foods, but it has often been—and continues to be—damaged and degraded by human activities; and

WHEREAS, ongoing threats to the First Foods often result from Federal and State agencies' failure to recognize our First Foods through: poorly-planned and/or executed water project development, withdrawals and management actions; State and Federal fish and wildlife management actions and decisions; hydropower development, operations and licensing; other energy generation and transmission; discharges of toxics and other pollutants to water, land and air; agricultural, forestry and other land management practices; urban and industrial development; and Climate Change and ocean alterations; and

WHEREAS, many tribes have treaties or have executive orders with the United States that guarantee the availability of our First Foods, the Federal Government has a Trust Responsibility to safeguard tribal trust assets, and tribal members suffer disparate, disproportionate impacts from harm to the First Foods contrary to the principles of Environmental Justice; and

WHEREAS, Federal agencies have individual missions and responsibilities that overlap with our mission to protect and enhance First Foods, thereby creating explicit opportunities for inter-governmental collaboration, partnerships and progress to our mutual benefit; and

WHEREAS, in taking care of our First Foods we are taking care of our land, air and water for the next seven generations and beyond, as taught by our elders, which will not only benefit our people but all those who live in the United States.

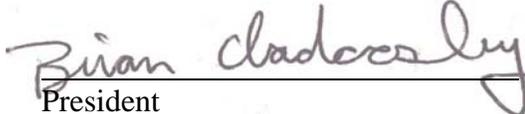
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI encourages the United States government, and all its constituent agencies, to fulfill its trust obligations and embrace and support the shared mission to protect, enhance, restore and assure tribal access to the First Foods; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI encourages the Federal Government to assess, evaluate and, if appropriate, develop and revise its plans, actions and activities (including those involving an oversight role with the States) so as to consider, promote and maximize consistency with the mission to safeguard tribal First Foods; 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 2014 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, October 26-31, 2014 in Atlanta, Georgia, with a quorum present.


President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary