



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ANC-14-031

TITLE: Supporting the Sovereign Right of the Ahtna Federally Recognized Tribes to Co-Manage Wildlife in their Traditional Hunting Territory

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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, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives for NCAI; and

WHEREAS, NCAI understands and fully appreciates the unique legal framework governing the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) lands and the difficulties faced by the 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska when seeking to govern those lands; and

WHEREAS, NCAI acknowledges the inherent right of all federally recognized tribes, including Alaska tribes, to exercise self-determination and self-governance over their peoples and land as they have done from time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, Ahtna, Incorporated is one of 13 Alaska Native Regional Corporations established by Congress under terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971 and seven of the eight villages within the Ahtna Region are merged with Ahtna, Inc., and all eight Ahtna villages are federally recognized tribes.

WHEREAS, Ahtna, Inc. has more than 1,800 shareholders, many of whom still reside in their traditional homeland of the Cantwell and Copper River regions and who live a customary and traditional lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, NCAI recognizes that the Alaska Federation of Natives, numerous Alaska Native tribes, and Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians have passed resolutions of support for Ahtna's efforts to secure its customary and traditional hunting and fishing rights; and

WHEREAS, NCAI recognizes that customary and traditional hunting is vital to the preservation of the Ahtna culture and the customary and traditional hunting way of life of the Ahtna people; and

WHEREAS, NCAI recognizes and understands the cultural, economic and nutritional hardships suffered by the Ahtna Tribes of Alaska because of the legal and practical issues preventing them from managing and practicing their customary and traditional hunting way of life and having access to their traditional areas and resources; and

WHEREAS, NCAI recognizes that customary and traditional hunting is an inherent right of the Ahtna people and a practice that existed for thousands of years prior to European contact; and

WHEREAS, NCAI supports the right and necessity of the Ahtna Tribes of Alaska to be fully engaged in the management of the wildlife populations they depend upon, including the right to exclusively manage wildlife on lands that were part of their lands claims settlement, and a central co-management role for developing wildlife management plans on the state and federal lands within Ahtna's traditional use area; and

WHEREAS, NCAI acknowledges that the Ahtna Tribes of Alaska, Ahtna ANCSA corporations are united in supporting the concepts for tribal management and co-management and that the Alaska Native Community is united in its strong support for Ahtna's legislative effort for a co-management model for other Alaska Native regions as expressed through numerous resolutions adopted by the Alaska Federation of Natives and many other Alaska Native organizations; and

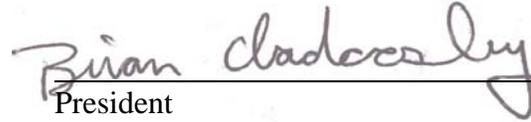
WHEREAS, the existing right of tribes to co-manage their resources have been successfully adjudicated in federal court, for example *United States v. Washington*, 384 F. Supp. 312 (W.D. Wash. 1974) and *Lac Courte Oreilles Band v. Voight*, 700 F.2d 341 (7th Cir. 1983), and acknowledged by various federal, state, and local governments through the creation of co-management agreements with tribes.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI and its member tribes hereby express full support for federal legislation establishes a pilot project that empowers the self-determination of the Ahtna people and protects their customary and traditional hunting way of life, by authorizing the Ahtna Tribes of Alaska to: (1) exclusively manage wildlife on lands owned by Ahtna and lands held in restricted status by the United States for Ahtna tribal members; (2) enter into a co-management agreement with federal and state agencies to develop wildlife management plans for all lands within Ahtna's traditional use area; and (3) creates a co-management model for other Alaska regions; and

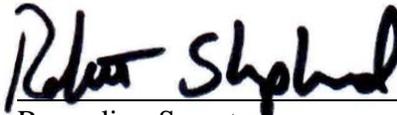
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2014 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Dena'ina Civic & Convention Center, June 8-11, 2014 in Anchorage, Alaska, with a quorum present.


President

ATTEST:


Recording Secretary