

**THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF  
AMERICAN INDIANS**

**RESOLUTION #SPO-01-009**

**Title: Support for Community Telecommunications Planning Act, S. 1056**

**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**, without access to both basic and advanced telecommunications services, Indian Country cannot participate fully in the digital economy, nor can it harness the latest tools to improve the delivery of health care and education to community members; and

**WHEREAS**, Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide, a 1999 Department of Commerce study, showed that, for telephone penetration, rural Native American households rank far below the national average, with a penetration rate of only 76.4 percent, compared to 94.1 percent; and

**WHEREAS**, the lack of infrastructure and equipment is often the greatest obstacle to connectivity in Indian Country; and

**WHEREAS**, limited access to capital often prevents tribal governments from planning and building telecommunications systems and seriously undermines the formation of tribally-owned businesses that could provide telecommunications services; and

**WHEREAS**, the Community Telecommunications Planning Act, S. 1056, would provide \$60 million in FY 2002, and such sums as may be necessary in subsequent years, to help communities build their telecommunications infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, tribal governments are among the eligible applicants under S. 1056, which would give priority for funding to entities that propose to use their awards in rural and underserved areas.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NCAI does hereby call upon Congress to pass, and the President to sign, the Community Telecommunication Planning Act, which would provide funding for tribal technology planning activities.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Spokane Convention Center, in Spokane, Washington on November 25-30, 2001 with a quorum present.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tex Hall, President

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Colleen Cawston, Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Spokane Convention Center, in Spokane, Washington on November 25-30, 2001.