

**THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF
AMERICAN INDIANS**

RESOLUTION #SPO-01-021

Title: Support for Senator Domenici's Legislation to Adjust the Federal Budget Caps to Fund Tribal Water and Land Claims Settlements

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, NCAI believes that the settlement of tribal water and land claims is one of the most important aspects of the United States' first obligations to Indians and is of vital importance to the country as a whole; and

WHEREAS, under current federal budgetary policy, funding of tribal water and land claims settlements is subject to federal budget caps, with the usual result that no settlement can be funded without a corresponding reduction in the Bureau of Indian Affairs budget or some other part of the Interior Department budget; and

WHEREAS, the practical effect of this budgetary policy is to preclude the negotiation and settlement of tribal water and land claims, as demonstrated by the fact that since 1994 there were virtually no Indian water or land claims settlements approved until the end of the last Congress; and

WHEREAS, Senator Pete Domenici of New Mexico, Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, has developed a legislative proposal in discussion with the states, tribes, and businesses across the west, endorsed by the Native American Rights Fund and tribal representatives on the Indian Water Funding Task Force, which would adjust the federal budget caps for tribal water and land claims settlement funding; and

WHEREAS, many member tribes of NCAI are involved in resolving their water and land claims either through litigation or negotiation and may at some point require federal funding to achieve and implement settlements.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby fully support Senator Domenici's legislative proposal to adjust the federal budget caps for tribe water and land claims settlement funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI does hereby strongly urge the United State Senate and House of Representative and the Bush Administration to support this legislative proposal by enacting and signing legislation that will adjust the federal budget caps for tribal water and land claims settlement funding; 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 at the 58th 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 58th Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Spokane Convention Center, in Spokane, Washington on November 25-30, 2001.