



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

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RESOLUTION #SPO-01-008

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Tex G. Hall
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(Pueblo of San Juan)

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Colville Confederated Tribes

TREASURER
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St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

Title: Support for NATIVE Act, S. 761

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians in our own distinct territories, 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, and 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 building telecommunications systems and seriously undermines the formation of tribally-owned businesses that could provide telecommunications services; and

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WHEREAS, on April 24, 2000, Senators Baucus (D-MT), Daschle (D-SD), Bingaman (D-NM), and Johnson (D-SD) introduced the Native American Telecommunications Improvement and Value Enhancement Act (NATIVE Act, S. 761), which would create a \$1 billion revolving loan fund for tribal cooperatives or tribal entities that have partnered with a telecommunications carrier to create a wireline or wireless telecommunications infrastructure; and

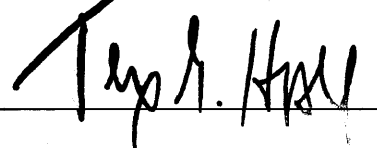
WHEREAS, the NATIVE Act also would establish a grant program to provide matching grants to tribes to conduct feasibility studies for tribal telecommunications projects; and

WHEREAS, both the revolving loan and grant program would expire when 94% of households on tribal lands have telephone service, or ten years after the date the first loan is made, whichever comes first.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby call upon Congress to pass, and the President to sign, the NATIVE Act in order to help provide basic telephone access to all Native American and Alaska Native households.

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 F. 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.