



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

RESOLUTION #SPO-01-011

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Tex G. Hall
Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation

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Colleen F. Cawston
Colville Confederated Tribes

TREASURER
Alma Ransom
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

Title: Recognition and Support for the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Kayaani Commission and the Preservation of the Traditional Uses of Plants and Forest Resources

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, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, a member of NCAI, is a federally recognized tribal government responsible for maintaining the health, safety, welfare and cultural preservation for over 3,000 tribal citizens in Sitka, Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Sitka Tribal citizens continue to harvest and gather plant foods, medicinal plants and organic art materials as they have done since time immemorial from the Sitka Tribe's traditional territory; and

WHEREAS, Sitka Tribal citizens began to meet in 1997 in response to the United States Forest Service's plans to develop "Special Forest Products" harvest guidelines for Region 10 and in 1998 the Sitka Tribe of Alaska formally recognized this active group of individuals by establishing the Kayaani Commission by Tribal Resolution and Ordinance; and

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WHEREAS, the Sitka Tribe and the Kayaani Commission worked with the United States Forest Service for 4 years as advocates of protecting the plant resources in the Tribe's traditional territory from commercial over-harvest; and

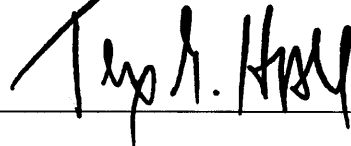
WHEREAS, the Kayaani Commission, with financial assistance from the National Park Service, hosted a Regional Haa Kayaani (Our Plants) Conference in Sitka, Alaska in May 2001 to bring together elders and plant harvesters together to celebrate and communicate traditional uses of the region's plants.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby acknowledge the importance of traditionally utilized plants to the Tlingit people and recognizes the exhaustive work of the Sitka Tribe, its Kayaani Commission and other involved tribal entities to protect the Tlingit peoples' inherent right to harvest plants for physical & spiritual sustenance, weaving & carving & other artwork, traditional trade & barter and for sharing with friends & family; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the NCAI supports the Sitka Tribe and the Kayaani Commission's efforts to become a self-supporting tribal entity under the Sitka Tribe of Alaska that will assist with the continuation of regional yearly traditional plant-use conferences, the protection of traditionally used plants and the continuation of the customary uses of plants by the indigenous people of Southeastern Alaska.

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.