



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

RESOLUTION #MSH-01-016

Title: Opposing Ratification of the Indigenous Law Bill and Supporting Adoption of the COCOPA Initiative

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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 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, largest, and most representative national American Indian and Alaska Native tribal government organization; and

WHEREAS, the member tribes of the NCAI are autonomous nations whose individual and collective histories predate the founding of the United States of America and the Republic of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Mexican government's denial of the fundamental Indigenous right to free determination and autonomy within the framework of the Mexican State resulted in the formation of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in 1994 and the EZLN's subsequent movement to gain recognition of these rights for all Mexico's Indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of the San Andrés Accords by the Mexican government and the EZLN in 1996 was a first step toward gaining meaningful legal recognition and protection for Mexico's Indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS, the Mexican Congressional Commission on Concordance and Pacification (COCOPA) did draft an initiative ("COCOPA Initiative") designed to implement the 1996 San Andrés Accords; and

WHEREAS, the COCOPA Commission and the EZLN did sign the COCOPA Initiative on November 20, 1996; and

WHEREAS, the Mexican government has failed to honor the San Andrés Accords which it signed and refused to enact the COCOPA Initiative drafted by its own officials; and

WHEREAS, during this struggle, the Indigenous National Congress was founded and has now grown to represent the will of an ever increasing number of Indigenous peoples across Mexico; and

WHEREAS, in part as a result of this growing movement, President Vicente Fox introduced the COCOPA Initiative to the Congress of Mexico on December 5, 2000; and

WHEREAS, an EZLN delegation subsequently traveled to Mexico City with numerous supporters and members of the Indigenous National Congress to continue a dialogue with the Congress of Mexico, the Indigenous peoples of Mexico and the "civil society", the private citizens of Mexico, and to urge the COCOPA Initiative's adoption; and

WHEREAS, while the EZLN delegation did meet with the Mexican Congress on March 28, 2001, one month later the Congress adopted a so-called "Indigenous Law Bill" that fails to recognize or protect the Indigenous rights previously acknowledged by the COCOPA; and

WHEREAS, on April 29, 2001, the EZLN issued a statement that it "formally denounces this constitutional amendment on Indigenous rights and culture. It does not keep the spirit of the San Andrés Accords, disrespects the COCOPA Initiative, completely ignores national and international demands for recognition of Indigenous rights and culture, sabotages the incipient process of building a relationship between the federal government and the EZLN, betrays the hopes for a negotiated solution to the war in Chiapas, and reveals the total divorce of the political class from popular demand."; and

WHEREAS, the Indigenous Law Bill that was passed by the Congress of Mexico must first be ratified by more than one-half the states of the Republic of Mexico before becoming law.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that NCAI member tribes honor and affirm our kinship with the Indigenous peoples now living within the Republic of Mexico and support the efforts of the EZLN, the Indigenous National Congress, and Mexican Indigenous people to finally gain recognition of Mexican Indigenous peoples' rights through full implementation of the San Andrés Accords and adoption of the COCOPA Initiative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NCAI opposes the adoption and ratification of the Indigenous Law Bill and urges all state legislatures of the Republic of Mexico to reject this Bill when it is presented; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that NCAI urges President Fox to actively oppose the Indigenous Law Bill and to further oppose any effort to undermine or invalidate the San Andrés Accords.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2001 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket, Connecticut on May 13-16, 2001, with a quorum present.



Susan Masten, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel, Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 2001 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held in Mashantucket, Connecticut on May 13-16, 2001.