



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

RESOLUTION #MSH-01-023

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

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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, 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 the 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 NCAI is in full support of Senator Domenici's legislative proposal to adjust the federal budget caps for tribal water and land claims settlement funding; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NCAI does hereby strongly urge the United States Senate and House of Representatives 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.

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.