



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

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### RESOLUTION #MSH-01-044

#### Title: Environmental Crisis

**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 and other national Indian organizations have approached the Congress, the Administration and respective Office, Agency or Department emphasizing the health conditions of Indian Country, being the worst in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the EPA has 30 years experience in working with states nurturing this relationship through hands-on technical and program assistance, and providing significant funding through numerous grants enabling the state's to develop sophisticated environmental protection programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the EPA 1984 Indian Policy created an opportunity for the Tribes to work with the EPA in carrying-out environmental statutes in Indian Country, and was not truly implemented until the 1994 Indian General Assistance Program (I-GAP) was passed by Congress with the Indian Policy Directives and the Tribal Operations Committee being Administratively established to provide a direct link for EPA to work cooperatively with the Tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, many Tribes over these last seven years have established meaningful Tribal environmental programs ever expanding their capacity and capability for including more programs than has been made available in the past; and

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*Yurok Tribe*

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**WHEREAS**, I-GAP serves as the base funding for Tribe's environmental infrastructure similar to a state DEP, and a minimum of \$62.5 million is needed to reach all the Tribes and Tribal Consortia; and

**WHEREAS**, within EPA there are 63 Program Elements of which only 3-5 generally are awarded to only 35% of the Tribes, many of which are competitive programs without continuity, and, may never realize that relationship which states have enjoyed with EPA over 30 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Tribal Elders identify the pollution of Tribal lands to be the equivalent of the smallpox blankets distributed to hundreds of Tribes by Lord Amherst and King George III, equaling cultural genocide; and

**WHEREAS**, our Elders tell us, Mother Earth cannot continue to be abused, and it is now time for all of us to help her.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that NCAI does hereby support increased funding for EPA's Indian Program to nurture EPA's relationship with the Tribes and implement environmental protection equivalent to that of the state's; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI does hereby support the increased funding of EPA's Indian Program budget, especially in support of all media and enforcement programs of at least 5% across the full range of EPA's environmental programs as a add-on for Tribes, besides the \$65 Million needed for I-GAP; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI supports new funding for this request including a separate appropriation for the Indirect Costs which are incurred by the participating tribes similar to the BIA and IHS budget IDC appropriations; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NCAI does hereby support this resolution including increased support for the EPA infrastructure to ensure EPA's Indian Program efficiency and effectiveness at the headquarters, AIEO, and regional levels.

**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 Majal, 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.