



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

**The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #ABQ-19-048**

**TITLE: Prioritizing Water Resources Development Act Projects that Improve
Natural and Cultural Resource Protections**

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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 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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 Willamette River, part of the Columbia River Basin, is a nationally, regionally, and locally significant watershed and ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, fish and wildlife populations which are treaty reserved cultural resources, especially those protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), have declined due to the impacts of past flood control efforts and years of urban development; and

WHEREAS, climate change is placing an increasing strain on the ecosystem of the Columbia River basin; and

WHEREAS, the federal government, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has a trust responsibility to protect our salmon, lamprey, steelhead, southern resident orcas, other aquatic and wildlife species, for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Columbia River basin's salmon and steelhead runs were once among the largest in the world, with around 10-16 million fish returning to the basin annually, but have declined significantly, as have the populations of other critical species, including lamprey and sturgeon; and

WHEREAS, the Willamette River and the Columbia River come together in the greater Portland metro area, representing a crossroads for the many lamprey, salmon, and steelhead populations; and

WHEREAS, the Water Resources Development Act proposed projects, such as the Tryon Creek Highway 43 Culvert, in the Willamette River in the Portland metro region, are necessary to restore salmon, steelhead and lamprey to their historical abundances to protect and restore for future generations the natural resources on which our communities depend; and

WHEREAS, NCAI is concerned that current federal restoration priorities and appropriations do not fully protect and restore cultural, natural, and treaty reserved resources.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) hereby calls upon the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prioritize restoration projects authorized under the Water Resources Development Act that directly and immediately improve natural and cultural resource protection throughout its jurisdictional waterways, including the Columbia River basin; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2019 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, October 20-25, 2019, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary