Comments:
This resolution requests that NCAI call on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use Section 404c of the Clean Water Act to permanently protect Bristol Bay from the threat of the proposed Pebble Mine and other large-scale mines. It would also direct NCAI to support “The Call to Protect Bristol Bay,” a document created by the United Tribes of Bristol Bay (UTBB), the Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA), and the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC). This document calls for the permanent protection of Bristol Bay by requesting the EPA veto the proposed Pebble Mine under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act and requesting Congress establish the Jay and Bella Hammond Bristol Bay National Fisheries Area, through a similarly named proposed bill.

During NCAI’s 2019 Annual Convention and Marketplace, NCAI membership passed Resolution #ABQ-19-030, Call for the Protection of Wild Salmon in Bristol Bay, and Elsewhere. Proposed Resolution #AK-21-002 is substantially similar to this existing NCAI Resolution.

Recommendations:
This resolution is national in scope; however the Resolutions Committee does not deem this issue emergency in nature. Therefore, the Resolutions Committee recommends that this resolution be tabled and considered at the NCAI 2021 Annual Convention and Marketplace.

Sponsor a member in good standing (yes/no)?: Y
TITLE: Call for Permanent Protection of Wild Salmon in Bristol Bay

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 Bristol Bay watershed is a resource of global importance, supporting the world's largest sockeye salmon run and one of the world's largest Chinook salmon runs; and

WHEREAS, the salmon populations in Bristol Bay are entirely wild, representing one of the last abundant and sustainable populations of wild salmon in the world; and

WHEREAS, wild salmon in Bristol Bay has been the foundation of Alaska Native culture in the region for at least 4,000 years and continues to support one of the last intact wild salmon-based cultures in the world; and

WHEREAS, the fishery is economically important, supporting approximately 15,000 fishing and processing jobs and generating $2.2 billion in annual profit; and

WHEREAS, wild salmon are essential to the social, cultural, spiritual, and economic wellbeing and survival of the indigenous people of Bristol Bay; and

WHEREAS, the health of wild salmon populations depends on the pristine ecosystems of the Bristol Bay watershed; and

WHEREAS, impacts to the Bristol Bay resulting from mineral development, such as the proposed Pebble mine, pose a serious threat to the long-term sustainability of wild salmon populations and the traditional ways of life that depend on wild salmon.
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls upon the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to fulfill its responsibility to invoke Section 404c of the Clean Water Act to permanently protect Bristol Bay from the threat of Pebble and other large-scale mines; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI supports The Call to Protect Bristol Bay, a tribally led vision calling on the United States government to secure permanent protections that would provide long-term certainty for the Bristol Bay region’s robust natural resources, cultures, traditional practices, and subsistence way of life; and

BE IT FINALLY 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 2021 Mid Year Conference of the National Congress of American Indians, held June 20, 2021 - June 24, 2021, with a quorum present.

Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:

Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary