Resolutions Committee Recommendation
Resolution #: AK-21-006
Title: Calling on Congress to Prioritize Tribal Infrastructure Funding in any National Package

Comments:

This resolution urges the President of the United States and the United States Congress to fulfill their trust responsibility, to establish and fully fund an infrastructure and transportation package that includes the needs of Tribal Nations.

The Resolutions Committee suggests changing the title to this resolution to “Calling on Congress to Prioritize Tribal Infrastructure Funding in any National Package,” in order to reflect the sponsor’s original intention.

Recommendations:

The Resolutions Committee proposed amendments in an effort to make this resolution national in scope. This resolution has been deemed emergency in nature due to the current negotiations around infrastructure legislation. Therefore, the Resolutions Committee recommends that this resolution be considered by the Litigation & Governance Committee, Jurisdiction & Tribal Government Subcommittee.

Sponsor a member in good standing (yes/no)?: _Y___
TITLE: Calling on Congress to Prioritize Tribal Infrastructure Funding in any National Package Federal and State Transportation Packages

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, for decades, the federal government has recognized that Indian Country has sub-standard infrastructure in every sector, as documented in the Quiet Crisis Report of 2003, and the Broken Promises Report of 2018; and

WHEREAS, 70 percent of Native homes are in need of repair, 48 percent of Native households lack access to clean water, over 20,000 miles of surface transportation consists of unimproved earthen or gravel roads, 40 percent of Tribal households lack broadband, and there are hundreds of crumbling Tribal health and education facilities that impact life expectancy and education attainment. dangerous road conditions on Indian reservations have resulted in serious fatalities, from 2015-2019 more than 50 percent of Native American traffic deaths in Washington State occurred on county roads and other roads on reservations, versus 25% of all other races; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, the Pacific Northwest experienced devastating floods, which washed away roads, culverts, and damaged bridges and highways in Indian Country, and neither the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) nor the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) have made significant efforts to repair and restore these roads; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, the Pacific Northwest experienced devastating floods, which washed away roads, culverts, and damaged bridges and highways in Indian Country, and neither the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) nor the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) have made significant efforts to repair and restore these roads; and

WHEREAS, in the past 10 years Slater Road, one of two routes used for evacuation and in emergency services for the Lummi Nation, has been closed for lengthy periods of time due to flooding; and
WHEREAS, Chronic underfunding increased AI/ANs vulnerability to the coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) pandemic and resulted in our communities having, at times, the highest per-capita COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and Death rates in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the serious transportation infrastructure deficiencies in Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, most roads on reservations were engineered and built primarily in rural areas at a time when traffic volumes were significantly lower which has led to roads being seriously functionally deficient; and

WHEREAS, reservation lands are largely inaccessible and don't offer adequate transportation choices across all modes of transportation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) urges the President of the United States and the United States Congress to fulfill their trust responsibility, to establish and fully fund an infrastructure and transportation package that includes the needs of tribes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Pacific Northwest Governors and Legislatures must establish and fully fund transportation programs in all infrastructure and transportation bills that includes the needs of tribes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI urges State governments and the Federal government to promptly pass a transportation package that addresses the critical infrastructure and transportation needs of tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest; 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:

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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary
TITLE: Federal and State Transportation Packages

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, dangerous road conditions on Indian reservations have resulted in serious fatalities, from 2015-2019 more than 50% of Native American traffic deaths in Washington State occurred on county roads and other roads on reservations, versus 25% of all other races; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, the Pacific Northwest experienced devastating floods, which washed away roads, culverts, and damaged bridges and highways in Indian Country, and neither the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) nor the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) have made significant efforts to repair and restore these roads; and

WHEREAS, in the past 10 years Slater Road, one of two routes used for evacuation and in emergency services for the Lummi Nation, has been closed for lengthy periods of time due to flooding; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the serious transportation infrastructure deficiencies in Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, most roads on reservations were engineered and built primarily in rural areas at a time when traffic volumes were significantly lower which has led to roads being seriously functionally deficient; and

WHEREAS, reservation lands are largely inaccessible and don't offer adequate transportation choices across all modes of transportation.
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) urges the President of the United States and the United States Congress to fulfill their trust responsibility, to establish and fully fund an infrastructure and transportation package that includes the needs of tribes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Pacific Northwest Governors and Legislatures must establish and fully fund transportation programs in all infrastructure and transportation bills that includes the needs of tribes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI urges State governments and the Federal government to promptly pass a transportation package that addresses the critical infrastructure and transportation needs of tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest; 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.

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Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:

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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary