



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #AK-21-025

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### TITLE: Opposing Testing and Implementation of Solar Geoengineering Projects

**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 Saami Council represents the Saami People of Norway, Finland, and Sweden, Indigenous Peoples who have inhabited the northern regions of this part of the world for thousands of years; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI has engaged in international relations worldwide and has worked with the Saami Council for several years on asserting the inherent rights and responsibilities of our respective nations. Tribal Nations interests are not limited to our local ecosystems and environments, but also extend to all of Mother Earth and creation as an interconnected and interdependent environment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Saami Council is reaching out to Indigenous Nations and organizations to seek support for a letter to Harvard University, urging them to put a stop to the SCoPEX project. This is a step towards stopping any further efforts to test and develop solar geoengineering technology - a technology which the Saami Council do not see as a part of our chosen future. Solar geoengineering is the direct opposite of the respect with which we, as Indigenous Peoples, have been taught to treat nature. What we need is real and notable action that deals with addressing the root cause of the climate crisis, which solar geoengineering does not do; and

**WHEREAS**, in early 2021, the Saami Council was contacted by the Indigenous Environmental Network, IEN, and notified about a planned test by the project called SCoPEX (Stratospheric Controlled Perturbation Experiment) based at Harvard University, a scientific experiment to advance understanding of stratospheric aerosols that could be relevant to solar geoengineering, also known as SRM - Solar Radiation Management; and

**WHEREAS**, stratospheric aerosol scattering is one of several solar geoengineering technologies which aim to cool the earth by reflecting solar radiation back into space by injecting stratospheric aerosol (SAI) into the atmosphere. By doing this, researchers hope to artificially lower the planet's temperature as a means to tackle global warming. However, solar geoengineering is controversial and risky, with unsolved questions regarding ethics, governance, and power balances, and with unknown environmental and climatic impacts and consequences if implemented and set into practice. But most importantly, it does nothing to address the root cause of the climate crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, the Saami Council was informed that after several unsuccessful plans to conduct field tests over U.S territory, in the states of Arizona and New Mexico, the SCoPEX research team has now moved their first part of the experiment to Sápmi. Apart from the possible negative consequences of the technology itself, Indigenous peoples in the U.S underlined that the testing would violate the sacred relationship between Mother Earth and Father Sky and therefore stopped SCoPEX from proceeding. Following this, the research team turned towards the Swedish Space Corporation in Giron, Swedish part of Sápmi; and

**WHEREAS**, in the experiment, which would be used for modelling and predicting larger-scale effects of SAI, aerosols of calcium carbonate and other substances were to be released about 20 km above the Earth's surface. While the testing itself would be small and potentially have no or minor impacts on the surrounding environment, the Saami Council view these tests as a first step towards legitimizing SAI technology to be further developed. The Saami Council considers solar geoengineering technology to be contrary to the respect with which we as Indigenous Peoples are taught to treat nature. Our Indigenous worldview teaches us that humans are part of nature and that we need to live respectfully and not exploit natural resources, so that we can hand over healthy ecosystems to future generations. Solar geoengineering technology purports to put humans as masters of nature to control the whole earth, even the atmosphere, which goes against our traditional ways and practices; and

**WHEREAS**, in late February 2021, the Saami Council together with environmental organizations in Sweden sent an open letter to the SCoPEX advisory committee and underlined that there are no acceptable reasons for allowing the SCoPEX project to be conducted in Sweden or elsewhere. The Saami Council has also addressed the Swedish government through a letter to the three ministries responsible for environment, research, and enterprise. In the response from the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, the government underlined that geoengineering is not part of the measures for Sweden's NetZero emissions 2045 strategy, but that the government cannot control the operational activities of independent companies such as SSC. The Government expressed however that they will follow the further development of the issue; and

**WHEREAS**, at the end of March, the Swedish Space Corporation announced that they, in a joint decision together with Harvard, had decided not to carry out the planned test-flight in Giron in 2021. The SCoPEX Advisory Committee further declared that they clearly note the lack of consensus around research related to geoengineering and wish to arrange “[...] listening-based engagement activity in Sweden in order to help the Committee understand Swedish and Indigenous perspectives and make an informed and responsive recommendation about the equipment test flights”. This will, the advisory committee says, postpone the platform launch of the project until 2022. In April, the SCoPEX advisory committee announced that they are expanding their membership within the committee, as an attempt to diversify and expand the geographical scope of the group. Representatives from Indigenous Peoples and civil society, among others, are now encouraged to participate; and

**WHEREAS**, while the project’s experiment is now put on hold, Indigenous peoples’ concerns are not. The Saami Council therefore asks for support in its effort to urge Harvard to put a final stop to the SCoPEX project. The unknown risks of climate manipulation are risks we cannot take for the sake of our future generations to come.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) opposes the testing and implementation of solar geoengineering projects as these projects stand in conflict with Indigenous Peoples’ Traditional Values and Lifeways; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the leadership of NCAI is authorized to convey this position by NCAI communications and/or by signing joint communications with Indigenous governments or organizations so long as the communications are consistent with existing NCAI resolutions; 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