



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MOH-17-053

TITLE: Continued Support for the Paris Climate Agreement and Action to Address Climate Change

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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 UN 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, climate change is one of the greatest threats facing the peoples of the world today, and Indigenous peoples are often the most severely impacted by the effects of climate change and are facing immediate and significant impacts from climate change; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples depend upon the health of their ecosystems and natural resources for social, economic, and cultural vitality; and climate change threatens to destroy indigenous ways of life that have been sustained for thousands of years; and

WHEREAS, climate change poses a serious threat to the inherent and Treaty rights of Indigenous Peoples as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including, inter alia, rights to subsistence, traditional lands and resources, health, productive capacity of the environment, cultural heritage, sacred sites, and free prior and informed consent; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of Indigenous communities are facing relocation and losing homes, hunting and fishing ecosystems are changing drastically, and changes in weather patterns are adversely affecting the harvesting of plant-based foods and medicines; and

WHEREAS, the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) met in Paris at the end of 2015 to reach a universally binding agreement to address climate change; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the Paris Climate Agreement as stated in Article 2 is “to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change . . .;” and

WHEREAS, the U.S. became a signatory of the Paris Climate Agreement in April 2016, ratified the agreement in September 2016, and such agreement took effect with respect to the U.S. in November 2016; and

WHEREAS, on June 1, 2017, the U.S. announced its intent to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Natives tribes are leaders on the protection of ecosystems and the environment since time immemorial and have a sacred responsibility to protect our resources and ways of life for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, adequate response to the threat of climate change requires action by all governments, including Tribal, national, state, and local governments; and

WHEREAS, On November 4, 2020, the U.S. formally withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement in accordance with the provisions of Article 28 of the Agreement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians calls on the President to fully rejoin the Agreement as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) does hereby declare its continued support of the Paris Climate Agreement in furtherance of the sacred responsibility of American Indians and Alaska Natives to protect our resources and ways of life for generations to come; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI will continue to support and advocate for initiatives intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote climate resiliency that include but are not limited to:

- increased investment and use of renewable energy resources, like wind and solar, which will also promote economic development, clean power generation, and new workforce opportunities;
- efforts to increase energy efficiency planning and implementation that will protect the environment, reduce energy costs, and enhance quality of life in Indian Country and around the world;
- efforts to educate the public on current and emerging climate change impacts affecting Indian Country;
- implementation and improvement of the processes and planning associated with preparing for and mitigating impacts of climate change, such as the increased incidence and magnitude of events that require emergency management and disaster response; and
- further actions of Tribal Nations in the exercise of their inherent sovereignty to combat climate change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI calls on all Tribal nations, states, and local governments to commit to working to uphold the Paris Climate Agreement; 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 amended by the General Assembly at the 2020 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held virtually, November 8-13, 2020, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary