



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SD-15-015

TITLE: Calling for an Equal Role of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission in Unified Management for the Restoration and Conservation of Yukon River King Salmon

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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, 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, Alaska Native hunting and fishing practices, including the harvesting and sharing of fish, game, and other resources and the ceremonies which accompany these practices are essential to the social, cultural, spiritual, and economic wellbeing and survival of the Alaska Native people; and

WHEREAS, the tribes/First Nations of the Yukon River and its tributaries stand united to proclaim that traditional fisheries are inextricably tied to their cultural, nutritional, economic and spiritual well-being and way of life, and further recognize their responsibility and authority to exercise our tribal rights as stewards to our traditional territories and resources; and

WHEREAS, since time immemorial, they have properly cared for the fisheries of the Yukon River and its tributaries, but for the past 100 years the United States, Canadian, and State of Alaska have usurped management with no deference to tribal governments resulting in the collapse of the Yukon King Salmon fishery; and a sustained period of steep decline of Yukon salmon stocks resulting in years of severe restrictions and closures of fishing opportunities that have prevented tribal members from meeting their essential customary and traditional cultural, spiritual, nutritional, and economic needs; and

WHEREAS, the tribes of the Yukon River and tributaries are united in a commitment to conserve, restore, and provide for tribal use of fisheries based on indigenous knowledge systems, and scientific principles; and

WHEREAS, the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (YRITFC) was founded on tribal unity, for the health and wellbeing of their tribal members, their future generations, and all Alaskans and Canadians who rely upon the health of the fisheries; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 and 2015 YRITFC called for a self-imposed Yukon King fishing moratorium which left tribal members with little to no traditional King Salmon harvest, but, for the first time in over a decade, the United States met their escapement goal to Canada in 2014, and then exceeded their escapement goal in 2015, all to ensure the continued existence of the Yukon River King Salmon; and

WHEREAS, no state or federal agency, and no group of users, have a greater stake in management of the Yukon River salmon stocks, or a broader base of knowledge and understanding, than the tribal governments and tribal members who, like their countless ancestors since time immemorial before them, reside in the Yukon River Drainage and Tributaries.

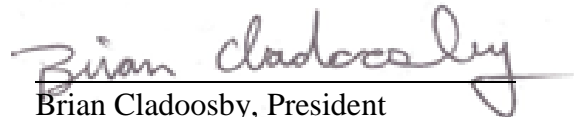
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) recognizes the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (YRITFC) as the true stewards of the Yukon River King Salmon, sacrificing for the future health of the Salmon and their people; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NCAI supports: the establishment of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission; all federal legislation necessary to create an equal role in natural resources management; the inclusion Tribal Chinook Management Plan and direct representation of the YRITFC in the Yukon River Treaty Process; and truly unified management for the conservation and restoration of Yukon River King Salmon; 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 2015 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Resort, San Diego, CA, October 18-23, 2015, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary