



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #ABQ-19-030

TITLE: Call for the Protection of Wild Salmon in Bristol Bay, and Elsewhere

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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 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 Yukon-Kuskokwin Delta (UKD) is critical to the protection of our Alaska Native subsistence and cultural resource rights; 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 14,000 fishing and processing jobs and generating \$1.5 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 and YKD watersheds resulting from mineral development, such as in the proposed Pebble and Donlin mines, 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 federal government, to ensure a rigorous, thorough, comprehensive, and transparent environmental review is completed before any decisions are made regarding federal permits associated with the development of mineral deposits in Bristol Bay and the YKD; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI calls upon the federal government to fulfill its obligation to engage in meaningful government-to-government consultation when making decisions that will potentially affect tribal nations and ensure that any review process incorporates Native values and perspectives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI is disappointed with consultation to date, in regards to permitting projects that would impact fish stocks in Alaska, and elsewhere; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI is opposed to any mineral developments that would have any negative impacts to traditional fish and wildlife without the consent of the affected tribal nations; 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 2019 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, October 20-25, 2019, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary