



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #ATL-14-082

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TITLE: To Protect Transboundary Rivers in the Alaska/British Columbia Region by Requesting the United States to Implement the Boundary Waters Treaty through International Joint Commission (IJC) Involvement

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, transboundary rivers of the Northwest British Columbia and Southeast Alaska region, including the Taku, Stikine and Unuk rivers, are of tremendous and unique ecological, customary and traditional use (“subsistence”), cultural and recreational value and are some of the most productive salmon rivers on the entire North American west coast; and

WHEREAS, salmon and other traditional foods are the foundation of our cultural existence and economic welfare and these transboundary rivers have nourished our tribal communities since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Native Tribes, B.C. First Nations, fishermen, local communities, elected leaders, and conservations groups on both sides of the United States/Canadian border have all raised concerns about the potential harm from the proposed developments to water quality, fish, wildlife and ultimately to the cultural existence, livelihoods, and local economies in the region; and

WHEREAS, healthy wild salmon populations in these river systems are a priority to our tribal nations and tribal citizens’ community health, cultural existence, and sovereignty; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Native Tribes and other organizations concerned about protecting water quality and salmon must be an integral to any transboundary watershed development decision making; and

WHEREAS, the United States must uphold its trust responsibility and obligation to consult with Tribes and protect our interests and citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Boundary Waters Treaty between the United State and Canada states that “waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other” and provides a mechanism for the United States and Canada to address transboundary river concerns known as the International Joint Commission.

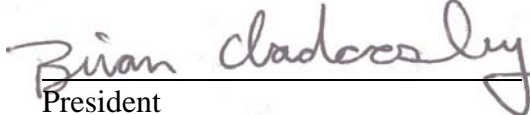
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI strongly urges the United States government (Congress, White House, and federal agencies) to uphold its trust responsibility to Tribes and to work with the Canadian government by referring the transboundary issues to the International Joint Commission and to utilize any and all powers under the Boundary Waters Treaty to ensure that our cultural existence and community health are not harmed by upstream development in BC; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that affected tribal governments be consulted with and represented in any policy discussion related to impacts to United States waters and communities per Executive Order 13175 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; 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 2014 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, October 26-31, 2014 in Atlanta, Georgia, with a quorum present.


President

ATTEST:


Recording Secretary