



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ABQ-03-074

### Title: Support for Native American Water Projects by Increasing United States Bureau of Reclamation Annual Appropriation

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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**, tribal governments are responsible for providing for the health and welfare of tribal members, including such infrastructure needs within their Nations as providing potable water to all members, which includes constructing and maintaining the facilities needed for these services; and

**WHEREAS**, water has long held tremendous cultural significance for all Native Americans, as well as being essential for economic well-being of Tribes throughout the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, infrastructure development is a high priority for Tribal Nations; and

**WHEREAS**, for many years, Tribes have been assisted in the development of water projects by the United States Bureau of Reclamation, part of the Department of Interior, which has been instructed to operate and maintain water projects on Reservations; and

**WHEREAS**, the budget for the Bureau of Reclamation has been reduced by Congress in recent years, diminishing the ability of the Bureau of Reclamation to protect the fundamental and critical needs that Tribes have for water and water distribution projects; and

**WHEREAS**, in the 1990's, United States Bureau of Reclamation has had a backlog of construction projects nationally of between \$3 to \$5 billion, and that backlog, when Tribal projects are added, is now over \$7 billion; and

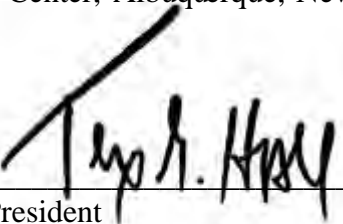
**WHEREAS**, as many of those new projects are on reservations, there is at the same time an increased need for Operation, Maintenance, and Replacement Program funding that must also become a major part of the Bureau of Reclamation's annual budget.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NCAI does hereby urge the United States Congress to honor its trust responsibility to Native Americans and restore and enhance the annual appropriations for the Bureau of Reclamation's budget for FY 2004 and beyond, to not only develop and maintain already established projects but to accommodate new Native American Water Projects; and

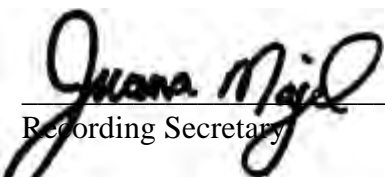
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

### CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico, on November 21, 2003 with a quorum present.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from November 17-21, 2003.