



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MSP-15-002

TITLE: In Full Support of the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

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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, hunting, fishing, and gathering rights have sustained our Peoples from time immemorial in our homelands; and

WHEREAS, the Kuskokwim River Peoples have successfully managed their natural resources, including their salmon species, for over 10,000 years; and

WHEREAS, Chinook and other salmon resources have been in rapid decline due to a wide range of variables including climate change, multiple interest groups, multi-jurisdictional boundaries, and differing management mandates and approaches between state and federally-managed waters; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska, since statehood, and the Federal Government, since the enactment of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, dual management systems have created managerial challenges of natural resources in the Kuskokwim River; and

WHEREAS, on May 5th, 2015, exactly one year after the passing of legendary Chairman Billy Frank, Jr of the Northwest Indian Fish Commission, 33 sovereign tribes officially established the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) for the purpose of developing one management system on the Kuskokwim River to rebuild their fisheries to preserve and support their way of life including nutritional, economical, and cultural needs; and

WHEREAS, the 33 sovereign tribes will immediately work to secure funding to develop the capacity to fully implement meaningful and effective co-management for Kuskokwim Fisheries; and

WHEREAS, KRITFC has appointed 3 in-season managers to work collaboratively and engage in equal decision making with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager on all matters related to Kuskokwim Fisheries in-season management; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Interior announced at the 2014 Alaska Federation of Natives Convention in Anchorage, Alaska and the 2015 Executive Council Winter Session of the NCAI in Washington, DC to begin a Kuskokwim Demonstration Project for the purpose of meaningfully engaging the Kuskokwim River Drainage tribes and rural residents in Kuskokwim Fisheries Management decision making processes; and

WHEREAS, KRITFC continues to be involved in the Kuskokwim Fisheries Management, but lacks the needed resources to be fully engaged.

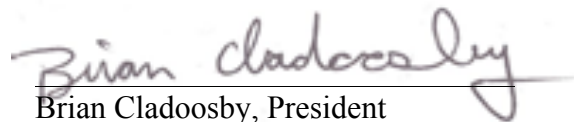
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI fully supports the permanent establishment of the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) to manage and rebuild their natural resources, particularly fisheries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI fully supports KRITFC's need to develop full capacity for the purpose of engaging in the meaningful co-management of their Kuskokwim Fisheries; 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 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the St. Paul River Centre, St. Paul, MN, June 28 to July 1, 2015, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary