



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-20-024

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TITLE: Renewing Support and Membership in the Native Farm Bill Coalition

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, Native agriculture is a \$3.4 billion industry and experts estimate that if Indian Country could capture its food supply chain, this industry could total \$45.4 billion; and

WHEREAS, according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service 2017 Agricultural Census, American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) farms and ranches make up 2.9% of all US farms, 2.3% of all US producers, and 6% of total farmland and this represents an under accounting of the total impact of Native American agriculture; and

WHEREAS, the Food and Nutrition Service is vital to many American Indian Communities because one in four Native Americans are food insecure. Nearly 24% of Native households participate in SNAP, nearly 280 Tribes are receiving benefits under the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Congress deliberates on the nature of food, nutrition and agriculture policy for the nation and the world by reauthorizing the Farm Bill which governs all farm programs, rural development, and nutrition initiatives within the USDA; and

WHEREAS, NCAI passed Resolution #REN-13-074 that calls upon the United States' Congress to fulfill its federal trust responsibility to Indian Country in the Farm Bill; and incorporate parity, opportunity, and consistency into the Farm Bill to encourage and support continued participation, development, and progress in Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI passed Resolution #MKE-17-013 that resolved the National Congress of American Indians to collect Farm Bill recommendations from tribal nations to use in advocacy efforts in Congress engage with tribal nations and partner organizations to advocate for tribal parity in the Farm Bill; and

WHEREAS, the Native Farm Bill Coalition (NFBC) was created in 2016-2017 to work on issues related to the Farm Bill and the original founding members were the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Committee (co-chair); the Intertribal Agriculture Council (co-chair), along with the National Congress of American Indians, the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative and the Intertribal Timber Council; and

WHEREAS, through the coordinated efforts of NFBC, 63 Tribal-specific provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill (Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, Pub.L. No. 115-334) were secured; and

WHEREAS, Resolution #MKE-17-013 did not address the extent of the National Congress of American Indians' commitment to further coordination with the Native Farm Bill Coalition after the 2018 Farm Bill reauthorization; and

WHEREAS, the Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) has stepped forward to provide grant funding in 2020 to support the educational and public issues advocacy work of the NFBC, through its co-chair the Intertribal Agriculture Council; and

WHEREAS, the work to prepare for the ongoing implementation of programs identified in the 2018 Farm Bill is important, as is the process of beginning to prepare for work in any subsequent Farm Bills; and

WHEREAS, the food system disruptions during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has shown the even greater need to make strong investments and policy changes for to build strong, resilient food systems in Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and federal response has additionally shown the strong vulnerabilities and gaps in the agriculture credit systems that are significantly limiting tribal producers ability to continue producing during these times, and the need for substantial changes to rethink credit and lending for agriculture to address credit deserts in Indian Country once and for all; and

WHEREAS, establishing additional and permanent tribal self-determination and self-governance authorities at USDA would help ensure that federal food assistance programs and farm programs could be tailored and delivered by tribal governments to the specific needs of their tribal citizens; and

WHEREAS, continuing to improve USDA programs and funding for Indian Country will help to ensure that tribal governments and producers can establish long-term plans and goals for their communities and the surrounding rural communities, and help Native farmers and ranchers continue to grow their food businesses and build tribal food systems to support our economies and communities through any time or crisis.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) renews its commitment to the Native Farm Bill Coalition (NFBC) for future Farm Bills; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI will work in partnership in coordinating and collaborating with the joint efforts of the NFBC on all future advocacy efforts relating to food, agriculture, nutrition and the Farm Bill-related programs emanating from USDA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI commits to continue to support the efforts of the NFBC and work with its partners, including the Intertribal Agriculture Council and Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, to advocate for improved food and agriculture policies at the federal level to increase food security, access, and food systems growing, and feed tribal citizens, with tribally produced food, in tribally driven food systems; 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 2020 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held Nov 8, 2020 - Nov 13, 2020, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary