



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #REN-19-005

TITLE: Response to IPCC 1.5° C Report on Climate Change

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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 Paris Decision, which adopted the Paris Agreement on addressing climate change, recognizes that climate change represents an “urgent and possibly irreversible threat to human societies and the planet”; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has found that Indigenous Peoples are among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and are disproportionately affected by it; and

WHEREAS, the parties to the Paris Agreement agreed in Article 2 to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2° Celsius (C) above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels”; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Structured Expert Dialogue (SED) report concluded that at 2° C of warming “...indigenous people[s] would be at risk of loss of land and cultural and natural heritage, and cultural practices embedded in livelihoods would be disrupted”; and

WHEREAS, Paragraph 21 of the Paris Decision invited the IPCC “to provide a special report in 2018 on the impacts of global warming of 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels”; and

WHEREAS, the IPCC issued its report on the effects of global warming of 1.5° C in October of 2018, finding that even at that level, the consequences of climate change will be severe, and drastically worse at 2° C; and

WHEREAS, the recent report of the United Nations (UN) on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services finds that one million species are at risk of extinction, and that climate change is one of the five greatest direct drivers of this loss of biodiversity and is increasingly exacerbating the effect of other drivers; and

WHEREAS, that same report found that “Nature managed by indigenous peoples...is under increasing pressure. Nature is generally declining less rapidly in indigenous peoples’ land than in other lands, but is nevertheless declining, as is the knowledge of how to manage it”; and

WHEREAS, the IPCC report found that drastic and unprecedented action in the next twelve years is necessary to stay within a 1.5° C increase; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 Emissions Gap Report from the UN Environmental Program stated that greenhouse gas production had actually increased, indicating that global actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are falling far short of what is required to meet the essential 1.5° C goal of the Paris Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the IPCC now predicts a temperature rise of 3° C or more at the current rate, which means 2-3 times higher in the Arctic, with devastating impacts for Indigenous Peoples around the world including American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations in the United States; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations in the U.S. are already experiencing the impacts of climate change on their lands and waters, including diminishing animal and plant species vital for nutrition and cultural practices, extreme weather events (floods, tornados, blizzards and droughts), changing weather and temperature patterns, among others; and

WHEREAS, climate change thus poses a serious threat to the inherent treaty rights of Indigenous Peoples as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including, *inter alia* rights to subsistence, traditional lands and resources, health, productive capacity of the environment, cultural heritage, sacred sites, and free prior and informed consent.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) reconfirms its commitment to the Paris Agreement, reminds Parties of their obligation to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples in all climate actions, and in light of the IPCC Report on 1.5° C, stresses that 1.5° C must be the absolute maximum target; that 2° C is unacceptable, and that action must be taken at the tribal, local, state, federal, regional, and international levels to have any hope of meeting the 1.5° C goal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI will continue to support and be engaged in the work of the Facilitative Working Group for the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LICPP) created by the UNFCCC COP 24 in Katowice, Poland in December 2018, will continue to participate as a member of the North America Indigenous Peoples Working Group on Climate Change, and endorses the calls of this Working Group for the establishment of safeguards for Indigenous Peoples’ rights to cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and Free Prior and Informed Consent, as well as adequate support for the direct involvement of Indigenous traditional knowledge holders and practitioners in the work of the Platform; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI calls upon the U.S. federal government as well as the United Nations Green Climate Fund to provide support and direct funding to tribal nations to carry out the above disaster relief and just transition programs; and

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

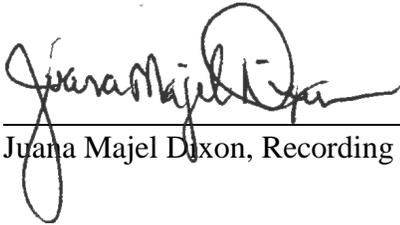
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2019 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Nugget Casino Resort, June 24-27, 2019, with a quorum present.



Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary