



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PSP-09-056

TITLE: Support for Native American Church of North America and Their Ability to Harvest Peyote

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Tlingit

NCAI HEADQUARTERS
1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
202.466.7767
202.466.7797 fax
www.ncai.org

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, the Native American Church of North America (NAC) is comprised of over 100,000 members and has official Native American Church chapters in over 30 states, with over 100 tribes practicing the religion; and

WHEREAS, an integral component of the peyote religion and practice in Native American Church ceremonies is the use, worship and ingestion of the sacred sacrament peyote; and

WHEREAS, peyote is grown and harvested in only one geographic location in America known to NAC members as the peyote gardens it is located on the Mexico Texas border on private lands; and

WHEREAS, access to harvesting peyote has been severely limited and is mostly confined to peyote dealers. This has adversely affected availability of peyote for NAC ceremonies. It has further eroded ceremonial protocols which require prayer and kinship to the land within the process of harvesting the sacred sacrament peyote; and

WHEREAS, in being denied access to the peyote gardens NAC members cannot fulfill their pilgrimage rights and prayer rights associated with the NAC; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI has always supported religious freedom of Native American Religions, and NCAI supported amendments to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act that legalized the use of peyote in NAC ceremonies; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support the NAC and their right to practice all of the ceremonies and protocols associated with the NAC including the harvesting of peyote; and

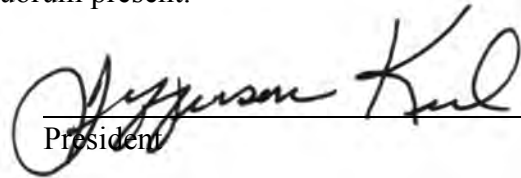
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI will form a working group from within the leadership of NCAI and the NAC to address the issue of access to the peyote gardens and access to peyote; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this work group will be formed and they will explore all possible options to protect access to peyote, including but not limited to potential legislation creating a peyote reserve/refuge; and

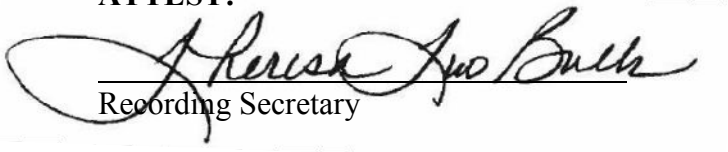
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2009 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Palm Springs Convention Center in Palm Springs, California on October 11-16, 2009, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:


Recording Secretary