



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SPO-16-058

TITLE: Calling on the USDA to Initiate Tribal Consultation on Issues Related to the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

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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, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) provides approximately 100,000 tribal citizens across 276 tribes with food packages each month, often serving as their sole source of food and directly affecting the health, safety, and welfare of the most vulnerable tribal citizens; and

WHEREAS, FDPIR is the only program in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) nutrition assistance programming that provides food assistance solely to American Indians and Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS, since FDPIR began in 1977, there has been no formal tribal consultation and very limited collaboration between USDA and tribal leadership on this program's operation; and

WHEREAS, tribal leaders' engagement and input into the FDPIR's operation is critical to ensuring that USDA policies, practices, and budgets are developed in a way is culturally appropriate and respects the inherent, sovereign authority of tribal governments to support the continued health of their citizens; and

WHEREAS, on February 23, 2016, at the request of the board of the National Association of FDPIR (NAFDPIR), 12 tribal leaders from across Indian Country met with USDA officials in an historic face-to-face meeting concerning FDPIR; and

WHEREAS, the tribal leaders present at that meeting requested that USDA, under Executive Order No. 13175 and USDA Departmental Regulation 1350-002, schedule and implement regular government-to-government consultations with tribal leaders on matters pertaining solely to FDPIR, including but not limited to: the sourcing of traditional and Native-produced foods for the FDPIR food package; funding and budgetary needs for the 123 Indian Tribal Organizations managing the program across Indian Country; budgetary needs for increased nutrition education materials for FDPIR clients; the quality and availability of foods in the food package; and other issues vital to the health of the Tribal citizens who utilize the FDPIR each month; and

WHEREAS, despite requests from tribal leaders at and after the February 23, 2016 meeting, USDA has not yet initiated a formal tribal consultation; and

WHEREAS, the tribal leaders will reconvene with USDA officials and the NAFDPIR Board on July 12-13th, 2016 to again request regularly scheduled consultations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, NCAI calls upon USDA and its Office of Tribal Relations to initiate and hold tribal consultations on issues pertaining to FDPIR; and

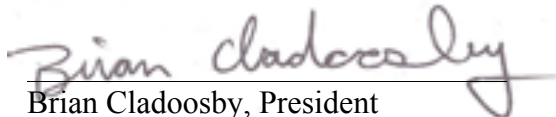
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NCAI supports the creation of a Tribal Leaders' Working Group as a means to coordinate the principles of tribal self-determination and collaboration between the federal government and tribal governments on matters related to Tribal sovereignty, health, safety, and welfare, as required by Executive Order No. 13175, President Obama's 2009 Memorandum, and USDA's Departmental Regulation 1350-002; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, nothing in this resolution diminishes USDA's trust responsibility to consult with tribes on a government-to-government basis; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, NCAI calls upon USDA to make consultations of this nature part of the regular course of policymaking for all relevant agencies within USDA that administer FDPIR.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2016 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Spokane Convention Center, June 27 to June 30, 2016, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary