



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ABQ-03-114

Title: Increase State and Telecommunications Carriers Compliance with FCC Guidelines Concerning the Increase of Telephone Subscribership in Indian Country

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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, only 67.9% of American Indian homes currently have telephone services compared to the national average of 95.1%; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules require eligible telecommunications carriers to publicize the availability of their Universal Lifeline Service programs in a manner designed to reach those likely to qualify for the programs; and

WHEREAS, the FCC rules additionally require that data be collected to identify the infrastructure needs and concerns of tribal communities in order to secure that all eligible individuals are benefiting from the Universal Lifeline Service programs; and

WHEREAS, certain telecommunications carriers are deferring to State agencies for marketing and outreach of their Universal Lifeline Service programs, which are not directed toward American Indian tribal communities, and which will result in the suspension of some existing marketing and outreach programs being successfully directed toward Indian country; and

WHEREAS, the telecommunications carriers have collected \$6.3 billion dollars on behalf of the Universal Service Fund nationwide, however little to none has been made available to Tribes or Native American owned companies to develop their own marketing and outreach plans; and

WHEREAS, telecommunications carriers have failed to expend a proportional percentage of collected surcharge revenue on outreach to American Indians in their states, for example of the \$285.2 million collected surcharge revenue in California in 2002, less than \$150,000 has been spent by telecommunications carriers to conduct market and outreach to American Indians in California, a state which is home to 107 tribes and two of the largest urban Indian populations in the United States; and

WHEREAS, a culturally sensitive marketing and outreach plan(s) is essential to the increase of telephone subscribership in Indian country (from 67.9% to at least a national average of 95.1%); and

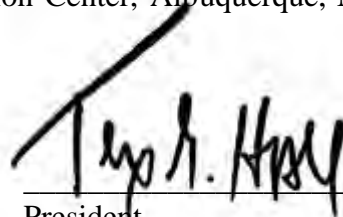
WHEREAS, a culturally sensitive outreach plan(s) requires consultation with Tribes, American Indian public relations groups and other with a proven record of effective marketing and outreach programming to Tribal nations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby endorse and support the implementation of a culturally sensitive marketing and outreach program designed to increase telephone subscribership by American Indians and calls upon the telecommunications committee to work with Tribes, Native American Public Relations firms, telecommunication carriers and States to increase American Indian telephone penetration rates in compliance with FCC requirements; and

BE IT FURTHER 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 at the 60th Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico, on November 21, 2003 with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during 60th Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from November 17-21, 2003.