



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-20-30

TITLE: Development of a 2021 Tribal Climate Crisis Action Plan

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 federal government has acknowledged the disproportionate impact of climate change on American Indian and Alaska Native people through administrative and congressional reports such as the 4th National Climate Assessment; and

WHEREAS, federal action must be taken to support the efforts of AI/ANs to adapt to climate change impacts and to reduce their carbon footprints through a range of mitigation approaches, including renewable energy development and energy efficiency, and provide AI/ANs access to the financial and technical resources that are required to assess the impacts of climate change on their cultures, air, land and water, economies, community health, and ways of life; and

WHEREAS, adequate response to the threat of climate change requires action by tribal, federal, state, and local governments; and

WHEREAS, the federal government's treaty and trust responsibilities to protect tribal lands include the duty to protect lands from the impacts of climate change, which requires that sufficient federal resources be equitably allocated to address climate change so AI/ANs can engage effectively in adaptation and mitigation strategies that will help ensure the integrity of their cultures, homelands, infrastructures, and services; as well as enforce tribal treaty and reserved rights to both on and off-reservation resources; and

WHEREAS, in January 2019 the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis was established to develop a framework for future climate legislation and conducted seventeen hearings between April 2019 and February 2020 including seeking direct input from tribal governments throughout the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis released its Congressional Action Plan (CAP) entitled "Solving the Climate Crisis: The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America" in June 2020; and

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WHEREAS, the CAP lays out a roadmap for climate action to be taken by congressional and Administration leadership and is structured to promote a set of integrated goals: reach net-zero emissions by 2050; reduce pollution in environmental justice communities; and reach net-negative emissions in the second half of the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, the CAP calls on Congress to build a clean energy economy that values workers, centers environmental justice, and is prepared to meet the challenges of the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI Climate Action Task Force Technical Committee, intertribal organizations, tribal nations, and non-profits recognized the importance of the CAP as one of the U.S. government's most extensive and comprehensive climate crisis action plans developed to date; and

WHEREAS, these stakeholders initiated a review of the CAP over a 6-week period in August and September 2020; and

WHEREAS, this review was a tribal expert-driven framework to review the CAP; and

WHEREAS, the co-authors coalesced into workgroups, based on interest and expertise; and

WHEREAS, the core team hosted a workshop at the virtual 2020 National Tribal and Indigenous Climate Conference (NTICC), which was organized by the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals; and

WHEREAS, during the workshop, 106 participants representing 97 different organizations, agencies and tribal nations from around the nation discussed tribal impacts, opportunities, concerns and priorities for each of the CAP's twelve pillars; and

WHEREAS, the report (<http://atntribes.org/climatechange/cap/>) entitled Tribal Review of the 2020 Congressional Action Plan on the Climate Crisis ("Tribal Review") provides tribal nations, intertribal organizations, and other interested parties with a framework of the CAP that will;

- (i) Provide information to tribal leaders regarding impacts and opportunities, gaps, concerns, and tribal priorities identified in a critical review of the CAP;
- (ii) Assist tribal leaders in strategizing to address the priorities and gaps of the CAP;
- (iii) Provide draft language that tribal leaders may deploy in communications with members of Congress, and others, to advance fulfillment of objectives, including tribal resolutions; and

WHEREAS, the authors of the Tribal Review identified six overarching themes that relate to the fulfillment of the CAP goals:

1. increase social-economic resilience to the impacts of an economic transition toward a carbon-neutral economy;
2. promote environmental and climate justice while upholding tribal sovereignty;
3. restore ecological resilience, thereby strengthening the federal government's capacity to ensure tribal access to culturally-valued resources (e.g., First Foods) on tribal lands, and ceded and ancestral territories;
4. assign value to Traditional Knowledge in climate change science, planning and action, while respecting the requirement for the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of AI/ANs;
5. uphold the federal trust responsibility, treaties, and commitment to formal government-to-government relations and tribal consultation;
6. uphold and expand institutions relevant to climate governance and science; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Review provides a basis for inter-tribal organizations, tribal nations, and AI/AN communities to explore responses to federally proposed policies on climate change, based on expert reviews of each of the 12 climate action pillars; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Review provides important preliminary findings and recommendations on the CAP for the NCAI Climate Action Task Force and Technical Committee to formulate and advance policy and congressional legislative actions.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI, subject to certain exceptions below, will use the Tribal Review of the 2020 Congressional Action Plan on the Climate Crisis as policy guidance; and

- Recognizing that the United States has a concurrent responsibility to fund tribal climate action and support inherent right to tribal self-determination and self-governance
- To adhere to the Congressional policy of promoting tribal self-government, NCAI, calls on the federal government to defer to the tribes' inherent right to develop and regulate their energy resources

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI will collaborate with tribal nations and organizations to build upon the recommendations of the Tribal Review in order to develop and implement a congressional, executive branch, and international tribal climate crisis action strategy.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2020 Virtual Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held November 8-13, 2020, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary