



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SAC-12-053

TITLE: Renewed Efforts to Protect the San Francisco Peaks

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 San Francisco Peaks (the Peaks) in Arizona have been held sacred since time immemorial by more than thirteen Native American tribes, and that the sacred Peaks are integral for the traditional and cultural religious practices of these Tribes; and

WHEREAS, the Peaks are ecologically significant and contain rare types of habitat and numerous threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant and animal species, including the San Francisco Peaks groundsel, a small flowering plant listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act; and

WHEREAS, the Arizona Snowbowl Ski Resort (the Snowbowl) has pursued an expansion plan that calls for the use of artificial snow made with reclaimed wastewater, and includes, among other things, a pipeline, an underground network of water lines, snowmaking equipment, and a ten-million gallon surface impoundment for storage of reclaimed wastewater; and

WHEREAS, artificial snow made with reclaimed wastewater will introduce recalcitrant harmful chemicals, including known “endocrine disruptors” that interfere with natural hormone levels in animals and humans, pharmaceutical compounds, industrial and household wastes, and elevated nitrogen and phosphorus levels which adversely impact soil and plants; and

WHEREAS, recently discovered evidence shows that artificial snowblowing machines and prevailing winds will spread reclaimed wastewater from the Snowbowl resort area into the surrounding Kachina Peaks Wilderness Area and into known locations of the threatened San Francisco Peaks groundsel and its habitat; and

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WHEREAS, the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), in their consultation and assessment of the Snowbowl expansion, did not consider the amount or the degree to which artificial snow made with reclaimed wastewater will adversely affect the threatened San Francisco Peaks groundsel.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI expresses continued strong support for the protection of the purity and well-being of the San Francisco Peaks; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI opposes the use of reclaimed water on the Arizona Snowbowl Resort; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI supports the tribal requests to the Forest Service and FWS to reinitiate consultation as required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and conduct a meaningful consideration of the effects of the Snowbowl expansion plan on the threatened San Francisco Peaks groundsel and the environment; 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 2012 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Sacramento Convention Center from October 21-26, 2012 in Sacramento, California, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary