



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-11-060

TITLE: Support the Nomination of Ohio Earthworks to become World Heritage Sites

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 United States Department of Interior has placed ten ancient American Indian sites of monumental earthworks on its Tentative List submitted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for nomination to World Heritage status; and

WHEREAS, two nominations are on the Tentative List: Serpent Mound and Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, which address ten ancient Earthwork sites: Serpent Mound, Fort Ancient, Mount City Group, Hopewell Mound Group, Seip Earthworks, High Bank Earthworks, Hopeton Earthworks, Octagon Earthworks, Great Circle Earthworks, and Wright Earthworks; and

WHEREAS, these sites were ceremonial and social centers, and characterized by large earthwork constructions that feature precise geometric shapes and standard units of measure. Together, these earthworks are the best preserved examples of the more than 40 monumental earthworks constructed by the Ohio cultures in the Ohio Valley (1-1120 CE), which are distinct from other mound-building cultures in Eastern North America; and

WHEREAS, their scale is imposing by any standard: the Great Pyramid of Cheops would have fit inside the Wright Earthworks; four structures the size of the Coliseum of Rome would fit in the Octagon; and the circle of monoliths at Stonehenge would fit into the small earthwork circle adjacent to the Octagon. The earth walls of the enclosures are among the largest earthworks in the world that are not fortifications or defensive structures; and

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WHEREAS, the presence of artifacts from far distant sources, especially of materials that were not widely traded 2,000 years ago, indicates that these sites were important ceremonial centers that interacted with communities in much of eastern North America; and

WHEREAS, the estimated 600 earthworks complexes in the Ohio Valley were left undisturbed by the subsequent generations of Indian people and may have been used and protected by them until all tribes were forced out of the area by 1850, when cities and farms were built on top of most of them, leaving only remnants of what had been built by the original inhabitants; and

WHEREAS, there are only two other ancient Indigenous places in North America that were built either as astronomical observatories or monumental architecture so recognized as World Heritage sites of universal significance and they are Cahokia and Chaco Canyon; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the ten Ohio earthworks as World Heritage Sites would protect the earthworks from further development and destruction and be places to honor indigenous achievement; and

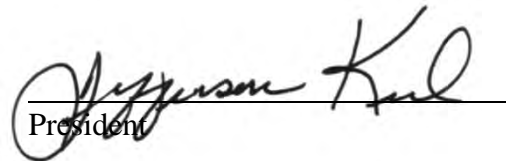
WHEREAS, all of the member nations of the United Nations have the right and responsibility of nominating the most important sites for World Heritage designation and the Department of Interior has that responsibility for the United States.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support and encourage the designation of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks and Serpent Mound as World Heritage Sites; 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 by the General Assembly at the 2011 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon on October 30 – November 4, 2011, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary