The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #ANC-14-012

TITLE: Support for Congressional Legislation to Protect Native American Seeds

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, from time immemorial, our traditions and culture have emphasized living with the land and understanding the surrounding natural resources that enabled us to develop farming methods such as crop rotation, irrigation methods, seed development, and many other agricultural techniques to grow crops to provide food to our families and communities; and

WHEREAS, our traditional form of farming is a culmination of sowing and harvesting of native seeds that have been handed down to us from our ancestors and which we will pass on to our future generations; and

WHEREAS, just as our families are attached to our homelands, so too are our seeds, which thrive in their place of cultivation by developing a relationship with the soil, water, agricultural practices, ceremonies, and prayers thereby giving seeds a sacred place in our families and communities; and

WHEREAS, our native seeds are used for cultural, religious, medicinal, ceremonial, and agricultural purposes; and

WHEREAS, our longstanding efforts to sustain our traditional ways of life and cultural practices of sowing and harvesting of native seeds are being threatened by environmental and other factors that compromise the integrity of our seeds; and

WHEREAS, traditional foods such as the “Three Sisters”—corn, beans and squash—have nutritional value and have always been sacred food for many Native Americans; and
WHEREAS, Native Americans suffer from Type 2 Diabetes at higher rates than the general population due to the rapid destruction of our traditional diet of foods of nutritional value that have been replaced with a diet of processed foods.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI supports and urges Congress to pass legislation that: (1) protects our native seeds for cultural, religious, medicinal, ceremonial, and agricultural purposes, (2) allows tribes to work with public research institutions to obtain grants for research, education and training programs aimed at protecting and preserving the purity of native seeds; (3) clarifies that certain grant funding may be used for the construction of seed storage facilities; (4) and requires the Secretary of Agriculture to develop regulations in consultation with tribes; 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 2014 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Dena'ina Civic & Convention Center, June 8-11, 2014 in Anchorage, Alaska, with a quorum present.

ATTEST:

[Signatures]

President

Recording Secretary