



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ABQ-03-034

Title: Support for Increased Federal Funding in BIA Water Resources, Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA), and Attorney Fees/Litigation Support Programs to Meet Tribal Governments' Unmet Needs

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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, Tribal Governmental needs for Water Resources, Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) and Attorney Fees/Litigation Support funding continue to increase as water quality and quantity issues and contaminated sites issues in Indian Country increase; and

WHEREAS, nationally, Tribal Governments' Fiscal 2003 needs for these program funds exceeded the current program funding levels by \$12 million for Water Resources, \$11 million for NRDA, and \$18 million for Attorney Fees/Litigation Support; and

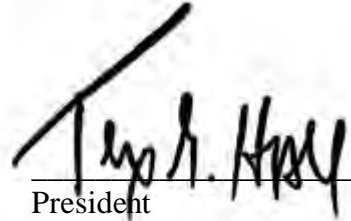
WHEREAS, this total unmet funding need for Tribal Governments in the Water Resources, NRDA and Attorney Fees/Litigation Support Programs of \$41 million continues to place Tribal health, welfare and resources at unacceptable risks.

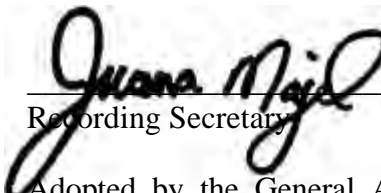
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby strongly recommend and support that for Fiscal 2004 the Federal Government appropriate \$20 million for BIA Water Resources, \$11 million for BIA Natural Resources Damage Assessment and \$35 million for BIA Attorney Fees/Litigation Support Programs, in accordance with the Federal Trust Responsibility to Tribes and Indian Self-Determination, so that Tribal Governments may reasonably protect their health, welfare and resources.

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.