



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #RAP-10-008

### **TITLE: Preserving the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program for a Continued Tribal Broadcasting Voice**

**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**, Congress through the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 declares that “public television and radio stations and public telecommunications services constitute valuable local community resources for utilizing electronic media to address national concerns and solve local problems through community programs and outreach programs; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress through the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 declares that “expansion and development of public telecommunications and of diversity of its programming depend on freedom, imagination and initiative on both local and national levels; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress through the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 declares that “it is in the public interest for the Federal Government to ensure that all citizens of the United States have access to public telecommunications services through all appropriate available telecommunications distribution technologies; and

**WHEREAS**, in Native communities, radio is the most effective medium for informing a community of weather forecasts, traffic issues, services available, evacuations, and other emergency conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, Native radio stations are essential in providing life saving information in many Natives communities that do not have available or effective 911 services and limited or no telephone access or broadband; and

**WHEREAS**, only 30 Tribes in the United States currently license and operate a radio station that specifically serves their communities; and

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT  
**Jefferson Keel**  
*Chickasaw Nation*

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT  
**Juana Majel Dixon**  
*Pauma Band – Mission Indians*

RECORDING SECRETARY  
**Theresa Two Bulls**  
*Oglala Sioux Tribe*

TREASURER  
**W. Ron Allen**  
*Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe*

#### REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

ALASKA  
**William Martin**  
*Central Council Tlingit & Haida*

EASTERN OKLAHOMA  
**Cara Cowan Watts**  
*Cherokee Nation*

GREAT PLAINS  
**Marcus D. Levings**  
*Mandan, Arikara and Hidatsa Nation*

MIDWEST  
**Matthew Wesaw**  
*Pokagon Band of Potawatomie*

NORTHEAST  
**Lance Gumbs**  
*Shinnecock Indian Nation*

NORTHWEST  
**Brian Cladoosby**  
*Swinomish Tribal Community*

PACIFIC  
**Don Arnold**  
*Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians*

ROCKY MOUNTAIN  
**Scott Russell**  
*Crow Tribe*

SOUTHEAST  
**Archie Lynch**  
*Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe*

SOUTHERN PLAINS  
**Robert Tippeconnic**  
*Comanche Nation*

SOUTHWEST  
**Joe Garcia**  
*Ohkay Owingeh*

WESTERN  
**Irene Cuch**  
*Ute Indian Tribe*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**Jacqueline Johnson Pata**  
*Tlingit*

#### NCAI HEADQUARTERS

1516 P Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.466.7767  
202.466.7797 fax  
[www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org)

**WHEREAS**, the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program (PTFP) administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) of the Commerce Department provides a competitive grant program that helps public broadcasting stations, state and local governments, Indian Tribes, and non-profit organizations construct facilities to bring educational and cultural programs to the American public using broadcast and non-broadcast telecommunications technologies; and

**WHEREAS**, since 1962, public radio stations have utilized PTFP grants for replacement, maintenance and necessary upgrades of audio production and broadcast transmission equipment; and in converting from analog to digital broadcast transmission technology; and

**WHEREAS**, the PTFP funding was zeroed out in the 2011 budget and Native Public Media (NPM) has been working hard to convince our Congressional representatives to restore the funding; and

**WHEREAS**, the Obama Administration is pushing to move the PTFP program from the Commerce Department to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB); and

**WHEREAS**, in 2007, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) opened a filing window for non-commercial educational radio stations, the first such frequency filing opportunity in more than 7 years. Thirty-eight Tribes responded by filing 61 applications. To date, 38 construction permits have been granted to Native applicants. Each of these new frequencies approved by the FCC will require a build-out, making the matching grant financing provided by PTFP vitally important; and

**WHEREAS**, many new Native stations will provide first service to areas of the country that would not otherwise have a public radio signal. Over 30 Native FM stations have received or are in the process of applying for PTFP matching grant support; and

**WHEREAS**, during FY 2009, PTFP approved 63 radio awards totaling \$6.422 million. Thirty-five (35) radio projects for \$4,875,943 will provide first public radio service to over 400,000 people and provide additional service to almost 2 million people. Some of the Tribal stations include: (MT) Box Elder (Rocky Boy Indian Reservation); (ND) Fort Totten; Shiprock (Navajo Indian Reservation); (OR) Bend and Brightwood; and (WY) Fort Washakie (Wind River Indian Reservation); and

**WHEREAS**, the largest of the sixty-four radio grants, for \$322,364, is a project for Dine' Agriculture, Inc. to construct a new public radio station on 90.5 MHz in Shiprock, NM, that will provide first and local origination service to 31,883 people and additional service to 11,166 people on the Navajo Indian Reservation and the Four Corners area of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah; and

**WHEREAS**, the loss of PTFP program and/or its funding will cripple the only existing infrastructure funding source for new and established stations; Tribal radios stations will be hurt the most from the loss of this funding because the number of tribal stations that will need PTFP funding in the next few years will double as indicated by the current construction permits.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NCAI does hereby urge Congress to restore funding to the PTFP program on an urgent and emergency basis. Without PTFP funding, more than 38 Tribes with Construction Permits will not be able to build their radio stations. Tribes remain among the most vulnerable, invisible and un-served in the broadcasting industry; and

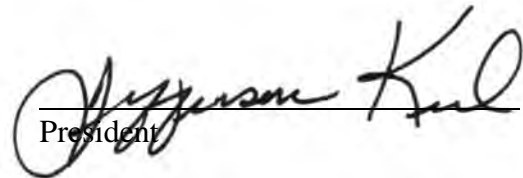
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the NCAI opposes moving the PTFP Program from the NTIA of the Commerce Department to the CPB; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the NCAI urge Congress and the Obama Administration to hereby support critical annual appropriations to the PTFP Program to ensure that the backbone of communications infrastructure for Tribal communities located in some of the most challenging remote and rural locations are supported, enhanced and improved upon as anchor institutions of public safety and programming for Native Americans; and

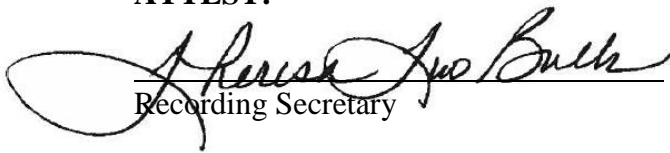
**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2010 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, South Dakota on June 20-23, 2010, with a quorum present.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary