



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ABQ-03-135

Title: Support for Continued Federal Recognition of the Eastern Pequot Nation

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, over the preceding four centuries, the United States and other foreign countries who occupied North American prior to the formation of the United States, did everything they could to eliminate many Tribal nations; and

WHEREAS, members of tribal nations that were not formally recognized by the Federal government continued to maintain their tribal affiliation and heritage, and have now been seeking federal recognition as Indian tribes pursuant to federal law and regulation; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation (EPTN) was recent recognized by the Federal government, under the federal process for recognizing Indian Tribes as provided in Federal law and regulation; and

WHEREAS, the members of the EPTN reside on one of the longest continuously occupied reservation in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the EPTN began its quest for federal recognition in 1978, shortly after the modern Federal tribal recognition process was established, made necessary because the EPTN had established a government-to-government relationship with Connecticut before the Declaration of Independence was signed and the United States was first formed; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was finally able to begin reviewing the tribe's position for acknowledgment, that petition received significant opposition from the Attorney General of Connecticut and local Connecticut towns; but despite this opposition, on June 24, 2002, the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs issued a final decision granting the tribe's federal acknowledgment; and

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WHEREAS, less than 90 days following federal recognition, the Attorney General of Connecticut and 29 local Connecticut towns filed an appeal with the Interior Board of Indian Appeals, asking that the Assistant Secretary’s final decision be reversed; and

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut and the other appellants appear driven not by concerns about compliance with the recognition regulations, but instead by a desire to stop the expansion of Indian gaming and prohibit future acquisition of federal trust land in Connecticut to ensure that the EPTN can never bring a claim for land against the state; and

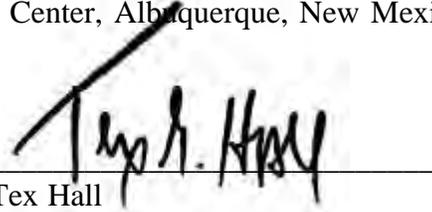
WHEREAS, the action of the State of Connecticut in appealing the federal recognition of the EPTN is an attempt to undermine the process of federal recognition of Indian tribes and hurts all tribes.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI hereby urges the State of Connecticut, its representatives and its towns to recognize its legal, historical, and political relationship with those tribes within Connecticut whose tribal, social, and political structures predate the Constitution of the United States, to respect the inherent sovereignty of those tribes and to engage in good faith bargaining regarding land acquisition, gaming compacting and other issues of mutual concern, and to refrain from using the Bureau of Indian Affairs regulatory process and the courts to delay a legitimate federal tribal recognition decision; and

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

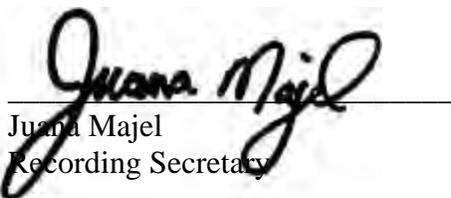
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted 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.



Tex Hall
President

ATTEST:


Juana Majel
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.