



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-20-027

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### **TITLE: Support Funding Increases to and the Expansion of Federal Transportation Infrastructure, Tribal Transit, and Highway Safety Programs Important to Tribal Nations**

**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 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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 nations have historically worked very hard to fulfill transportation infrastructure needs for tribal citizens and the general public's transportation and transportation infrastructure needs; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed increases in authorized funding levels included in legislation of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress to important transportation programs, such as the Tribal Transportation Program, Tribal Transit Program, and Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Major Tribal Projects program, and the establishment of a Tribal High Priority Projects (HPP) Program build and improve upon Congress' previous Transportation Bills, such as ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and the current FAST Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2017 report of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Report Card, concluded that investment needs for the United States between FY 2016 and FY 2025 is \$2 trillion, with an estimated \$40 billion in unmet needs for transportation and public transit in Indian country; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alaska Native/American Indian tribal nations and regional and national tribal transportation organizations have advocated for increases to the Tribal Transportation Program, Tribal Transit Program and federal discretionary and competitive grant programs to \$900 million, with annual increases ending at over \$1.3 billion, to address unmet Tribal needs and to reduce highway and pedestrian fatalities among American Indians and Alaska Natives that exceed the national average; and

**WHEREAS**, in July 2019, NCAI - in coordination with the Intertribal Transportation Association (ITA), a national tribal organization advocating for consensus positions to improve tribal transportation infrastructure, tribal transit, and highway safety needs in Indian country, released a proposed draft bill, the “Tribal Transportation Infrastructure and Tribal Transit Investment Act of 2020,” to reauthorize existing federal transportation programs for tribal nations and establish new programs, and urged tribal nations to endorse it and advocate for its inclusion as a “Tribal Title” in any reauthorization of the Fixing American’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee (EPW), the primary Senate committee with jurisdiction over transportation infrastructure approved out of its Committee on July 30, 2019, the “America’s Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019” (ATIA), S. 2302, including its Tribal title (Title (IV)); and

**WHEREAS**, in June 2020, the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee passed the INVEST in America Act that included many tribal provisions to address the unmet need of tribal nations in transportation and transit programs; and

**WHEREAS**, in July 2020 the House passed H.R. 2, the Moving America Forward Act, that incorporated the House T&I’s INVEST in America Act, including many provisions important to tribal nations such as the restoration of the exemption to the obligation limitation deduction to the Indian Reservation Roads and Tribal Transportation Programs.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that this resolution will replace ABQ-19-076; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) supports the tribal provisions in H.R. 2 and urges the U.S. Senate to support it, together with a viable means to pay for its many provisions, including the federal programs important to tribal nations; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI urges elected tribal officials to advocate for prompt passage of the tribal transportation and tribal transit provisions provided in H.R. 2 including restoring the exemption from the obligation limitation deduction for the Indian Reservation Roads and Tribal Transportation Programs; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that should the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress adjourn without passing H.R. 2 into law this session, or including its provisions in a COVID-19 stimulus measure, that NCAI further urges elected tribal officials to advocate to the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress that convenes in January 2021 and to the next administration to retain and approve H.R. 2’s tribal provisions to further empower transportation infrastructure planning, design, construction and maintenance, public transit, pedestrian and motor vehicle safety, and other innovative proposals to improve the economies of tribal nations and to make tribal communities safer for all our citizens; 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 2020 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held Nov 8, 2020 - Nov 13, 2020, with a quorum present.



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Fawn Sharp, President

**ATTEST:**



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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary