



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-20-032

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TITLE: Opposition to Water Projects, such as the Proposed *Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project* in the Mojave Desert, that will Impact Sacred Cultural Rights and Natural Resources that are Critical 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, the Mojave Desert in Southern California is the present-day home and the sacred ancestral lands of the Chemehuevi, Serrano, Cahuilla, Mojave, Southern Paiute and other Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, these sacred ancestral lands harbor cultural rights and natural resources along with animals, plants and beings that are critical to the cosmologies, cultures and way of life of the aforementioned local Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project* is not a conservation or environmentally friendly project; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project* will take enormous amounts of pristine sacred water from the local aquifers damaging and critically diminishing underground water and severely and irreparably impacting the sacred water springs and other cultural and natural resources that are so significant to local tribal peoples and their future generations, their cosmologies, cultures, and way of life; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project* will also place at risk the quality of the sacred underground water that is so vital to local tribal communities and their future generations; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides, at Article 19, that “States shall consult and cooperate with indigenous peoples. .. in order to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent before adopting or implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them”: and

WHEREAS, the Bonanza Springs, is a fundamental sacred place to the local tribal communities and will be impacted by the Cadiz Valley Water Project; and

WHEREAS, similar water projects, both existing and proposed, raise similar concerns for Tribal Nations throughout Indian Country; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) hereby opposes any water project, such as the proposed Cadiz Valley Water Project in the Mojave Desert, that currently impact, or will impact sacred places, Ancestors, spiritual connection, cultural rights, and natural resources critical to Tribal Nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in order to uphold tribal sovereignty and protect the health and welfare of Tribal Nations and their future generations, Tribal Nations must be included in the earliest planning and approval process for proposed water projects that potentially affect critical tribal water resources.

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.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary