



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MKE-17-057

### TITLE: Opposition to Amendments to the Antiquities Act

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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 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**, since time immemorial, the land of the United States has been a homeland and place of spiritual and cultural significance to tribal people. Tribal people remain dependent on public lands to maintain traditional livelihoods and cultural practices, such as hunting, gathering and ceremonial uses; and

**WHEREAS**, for the last century, tribal nations and tribal members have experienced removal from these ancestral homelands, and afterward, limited access to the land. Tribal nations and tribal members have also witnessed the looting of graves and sacred sites, and threats from more modern land uses such as off-road vehicle use and energy development; and

**WHEREAS**, the Antiquities Act was originally intended to protect American Indian cultural and archaeological resources and historic and scientific objects, and has subsequently been used by Presidents of both parties to permanently protect significant tribal, cultural, and archeological sites; and

**WHEREAS**, there have been efforts in Congress to amend the Antiquities Act to authorize the President to reduce the size of existing national monuments, to impose size limitations for future National Monuments, to remove protections for Tribal historical and prehistorical landmarks, and limit Presidential authority to protect areas of Tribal significance with National Monument designations; and

**WHEREAS**, the Antiquities Act authorizes protection of historic and scientific objects of great importance to Tribal Nations for cultural use by ongoing generations, and proposals in Congress would impose limitations to authorize protection of only relics and artifacts; and

**WHEREAS**, these efforts in Congress fail to include tribal consultation and yet requires approval of by counties, State legislature, and State Governors.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) opposes amendments to the Antiquities Act that would threaten National Monument protections for Tribal historic landmarks and objects of historic and ongoing cultural importance, would limit Monument designation sizes, and would not provide parity for Tribal Governments; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI continues to oppose any attempt to take tribal, federal, state, county land and sacred landscapes; 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 2017 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, WI, Oct 15, 2017 - Oct 20, 2017, with a quorum present.

  
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Jefferson Keel, President

**ATTEST:**

  
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Juana Najel Dixon, Recording Secretary