



## **TABLED**

### **2018 Annual Convention Worley, Idaho**

#### **RESOLUTION #18 – 44**

#### **“PROTECT AND RESTORE SNAKE RIVER SALMON, SOUTHERN RESIDENT ORCAS, AND TREATY RIGHTS”**

#### **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest 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 rights secured under Indian Treaties, Executive Orders, and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and constitution of the United States and several states, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise to promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are representatives of and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of the ATNI; now

**WHEREAS**, as indigenous peoples we honor in all ways our relation to Creation and in that spirit acknowledge a sacred obligation to ensure all our relations are treated in a dignified manner that reflects tribal cultural values that have been passed down for countless generations; and

**WHEREAS**, the Nez Perce Tribe has been party to a number of lawsuits under the Endangered Species Act and has attempted many methods to develop, continue and/or restore the native Salmon runs that fall within its Treaty of 1855 and Usual and Accustomed areas; and

**WHEREAS**, the Nez Perce Tribe has been attempting to bring back the Salmon runs to pre-dam levels; and

**WHEREAS**, the Nez Perce tribe has, along with a number of states and federal agencies, taken action to ensure that the Native Salmon runs are available for the future generations of Nez Perce including spending enormous sums of money on this effort; and

**WHEREAS**, the efforts by the numerous agencies and the tribe have achieved limited success in restoring the native Salmon runs; and

**WHEREAS**, Snake River wild spring/summer chinook salmon have not met the Northwest Power Conservation Council's recovery objectives, with smolt-to-adult returns at 1.1 percent since the year 2000 despite salmon recovery efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Army Corps of Engineers agrees that breaching the dams has the highest probability of meeting federal salmon recovery objectives criteria, and since 1999, the National Marine Fisheries Service's results demonstrated that Snake River dam breaching by itself is likely to lead to recovery of fall chinook and steelhead; and

**WHEREAS**, chinook salmon comprise at least 80% of the diet of endangered southern resident orcas – more than 50% of it from the Columbia River basin (which includes the Snake River watershed) – and dwindling chinook runs are the leading cause for the decline of those orcas to a critically low breeding population of fewer than 30 individuals; and

**WHEREAS**, the four lower Snake River dams have a benefit to cost ratio of 15¢ on the dollar, and sacrifice thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in potential benefits of a free-flowing river; and

**WHEREAS**, power from the lower Snake River dams is rarely available to meet peak power demands and maintaining them diverts funds from other more reliable dams and restoration work; and

**WHEREAS**, the Army Corps of Engineers needs no new authority to place the lower Snake River dams into a “non-operational” status and, further, has a fiduciary responsibility to do so; and

**WHEREAS**, breaching the dams can be financed through existing debt reduction and credit mechanisms as a fish mitigation action by Bonneville Power Administration and is significantly easier and less costly than originally planned; and

**WHEREAS**, the southern resident orcas and wild Snake River salmon are an integral part of the Pacific Northwest tribal culture and economy, and after 30 years of failed mitigation

efforts further delays will risk the extinction of our Southern Resident Orcas and wild Snake River salmon; now

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the ATNI hereby call upon the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration, and federal trustees to begin removal of the earthen portions of the four lower-Snake River dams to restore Snake River salmon, southern resident orcas, and tribal treaty rights to take fish in all Usual and Accustomed areas; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the ATNI calls upon Washington state congressional delegation and state elected officials to support the dam breaching process and to ensure a positive transition for the communities affected by the removal.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2018 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the Coeur D'Alene Casino Resort Hotel - Worley, Idaho, on September 17-20, 2018, with a quorum present.

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Leonard Forsman, President

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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary