



2020 Mid-Year Virtual Convention

RESOLUTION #2020 – 25

“SUPPORT TRIBAL AND STATE AUTHORITY TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND RESTORE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN SALMON”

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; and

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 southern resident orcas and wild Columbia River basin salmon are integral parts of Pacific Northwest tribal culture and economy; and

WHEREAS, many northwest tribes have treaty and/or ceremonial rights guaranteeing their ability to take and consume Columbia River basin salmon in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of numerous agencies and tribes have thus far achieved limited success in restoring native Columbia River basin salmon runs, and many such runs—especially in the Snake River basin—have gone extinct or are approaching extinction; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, Columbia Basin salmon experienced high-water temperatures that delayed adult salmon migration and ultimately caused record-high mortality, including the near-complete failure of that year’s Snake River sockeye run; and

WHEREAS, the Lower Snake and Columbia rivers routinely exceed tribal and state water quality standards or temperature designed to protect salmon migration, and attainment of these tribal and state standards would improve migration and reproductive success for Columbia River basin salmon; and

WHEREAS, adult salmon that encounter and are forced to hold in warm water during their upstream migration begin dying from stress and disease, and heat-stressed salmon are also more likely to succumb to predators, stray from their natal streams, and experience reduced reproductive success; and

WHEREAS, the best available science shows that the four Lower Snake River dams, and certain Columbia River dams, are the main causes of human-induced water temperature problems, and temperatures in a free-flowing Lower Snake River would be much more supportive of successful salmon migration and spawning; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a temperature Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) analysis under the Clean Water Act that identifies temperature reductions, called Load Allocations, for certain dams on the Lower Snake and Columbia rivers necessary to meet water quality standards for temperature and fully support salmon migration; and

WHEREAS, the Washington Department of Ecology recently exercised its broad authority under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act to protect water quality and fisheries by issuing conditions (hereinafter, “401 Certifications”) regarding the lower Columbia and Lower Snake River dams operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps); and

WHEREAS, Washington’s 401 Certifications legally require the Corps’ dams to meet Washington’s water quality standards for temperature and all other pollutants, including meeting the Load Allocations in EPA’s temperature TMDL; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI supports the Washington Department of Ecology’s 401 Certifications for dams on the Lower Snake and Columbia rivers to address temperature and other water quality issues and meet the Load Allocations in EPA’s temperature TMDL; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI hereby calls upon the Corps to withdraw its appeal of Washington’s 401 Certifications; and

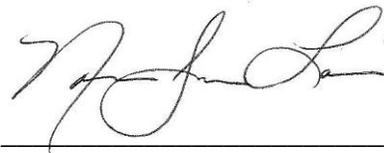
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that ATNI hereby calls upon EPA to withdraw its recent re-interpretation of Clean Water Act Section 401, through which EPA purports to deprive tribes and states of their authority, granted by federal law, to protect water quality and fisheries.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2020 Virtual Mid-Year Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Portland, Oregon, on June 30 – July 2, 2020, with a quorum present.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary