



2021 Virtual Winter Convention

RESOLUTION #2021 - 10

SUPPORT FOR THE WASHINGTON STATE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION BOARD

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, the ATNI Telecommunications Committee has been working diligently to address the lack of access to infrastructure that provides high speed internet and cell phone coverage in rural native communities; and

WHEREAS, ATNI member Tribes have made significant progress to inform, educate and advocate on broadband needs to the United States Congress as well as State Legislatures, the impact on Tribal economic development from the lack of broadband access; and

WHEREAS, the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) in Washington State is authorized to make economic development loans and grants, which includes funding for rural broadband infrastructure to local governments and to federally recognized Indian tribes; and

WHEREAS, the Legislative request to codify the Board's rural broadband program has been submitted via Senate Bill 5175. The codification of this program into RCW 43.160 will make this a core function of CERB and will provide stability and confidence to local governments and federally recognized Indian tribes, as they are planning for future broadband projects, that there is a permanent funding mechanism for them to access; and


WHEREAS, CERB is requesting capital funding up to \$100 million for all 4 of CERB's administered programs, this will allow CERB to continue funding community and economic development infrastructure projects and increase project development opportunities for local governments and federally recognized Indian tribes; and

WHEREAS, this will empower CERB to continue making grants and loans to local governments and federally recognized Indian tribes to build public infrastructure, which includes high-speed, open-access broadband service to rural and underserved communities for the purpose of community and economic development. Given the increased demand for community and economic development infrastructure funding, without the increased funding of \$100 million, CERB's funding will not last through the 2021-2023 biennium; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI fully supports the \$100 million capital budget request and Senate Bill 5175 to codify the rural broadband program for the State of Washington Community Economic Revitalization Board to support future community and economic development infrastructure investments.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2021 Virtual Winter Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, on January 25 – January 28, 2021, with a quorum present.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Loue, Secretary