



2021 Virtual Annual Convention

RESOLUTION #2021 – 37

“HATCHERY INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING”

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 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 ATNI; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has highly modified the Columbia River system for the purposes of hydro power production, transportation, irrigation, recreation and flood control; and

WHEREAS, this development of the Columbia River has destroyed innumerable fish stocks and severely damaged remaining fish stocks; and

WHEREAS, habitat modification in Puget Sound and Washington’s outer coast has also decimated fish stocks; and

WHEREAS, these fish are central to indigenous religion, culture, worldview, sustenance and economies; and

WHEREAS, in destroying these indigenous and treaty-reserved resources the federal government committed to partial mitigation by the development and operation of fish hatchery facilities spread geographically across the Columbia River basin; and

WHEREAS, in the *U.S. v. WA Phase II* (Orrick decision), the federal court clarified that hatchery-produced fish are also treaty-reserved fish when determining harvest sharing allocations; and

WHEREAS, Columbia Basin hatcheries were authorized and largely developed pursuant to several Congressional authorizations; and

WHEREAS, tribes also operate hatcheries in an effort to restore salmon runs and mitigate for lost harvest opportunities, and are supported by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as part of the federal government's trust responsibility; and

WHEREAS, there is extensive deferred maintenance at federally authorized and funded tribal and non-tribal facilities and some facilities have yet to be fully developed despite the damage to the fisheries, and in some cases, being authorized 50 years ago; and

WHEREAS, this deferred maintenance results in poorly functioning facilities that produce less than the targeted numbers of smolts, produce smolts that survive at lower rates, produce smolts with reduced health and these facilities have an unacceptable level of risk of catastrophic failure; and

WHEREAS, the impacts from climate change are putting additional stress on both natural and hatchery produced salmon stocks and, water temperatures, water supply and pathogens are just a few of the increasing challenges that salmon face in both natural systems and within hatchery facilities as a result of a changing climate; and

WHEREAS, significant investments are needed to make hatcheries more resilient to climate change to ensure the ongoing production of healthy stocks needed to mitigate, supplement and restore degraded stocks, and

WHEREAS, the salmon and steelhead produced at these facilities play a key role in the lives of the Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest and, due to the life history of salmon these fish contribute to harvest and diets in the Columbia River basin, along the coasts of Northern California, Oregon and Washington, Salish Sea, and into British Columbia and Alaska; and

WHEREAS, hatcheries are responsible for well over 80% of the harvestable salmon and play a critical role in the recovery of Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed fish; and

WHEREAS, COVID impacts to Native people are twice that of any group resulting in a 1 person in 250 mortality rate and, social determinants of health are closely tied to a healthy diet, a vibrant economy, and an ability to practice cultural and religious beliefs; and

WHEREAS, salmon and steelhead have been a core component of the Northwest native people's existence from time immemorial and continue to be central to our existence as Indigenous people; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI calls upon the Federal government to live up to the commitments they made in mitigating for a portion of the harm they created in the development of the federal Columbia River hydrosystem and fulfilling their trust responsibilities to tribes throughout the Northwest that also produce hatchery fish to ensure ongoing harvest opportunities and contribute to salmon recovery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Administration and Congress develop dedicated federal funding to address the deferred maintenance, hatchery modernization, and infrastructure needed to ensure ongoing production of healthy stocks at facilities that are resilient to climate change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Congressional budget reconciliation process, annual appropriations, any future initiatives (e.g. infrastructure package) and President Biden's Build Back Better Plan provide an immediate and once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet these federal and trust obligations; and

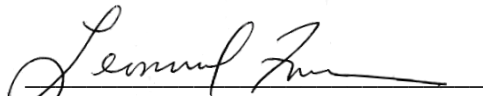
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that at least \$100 million should be provided for tribal fish hatchery infrastructure, including deferred maintenance, facility upgrades, and new facilities through the Bureau of Indian Affairs to help fulfill trust obligations to tribes; and


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that at least \$1 billion should be provided for Columbia River Basin federal hatcheries, which would ensure that these hatcheries operate at full program levels to meet federal obligations to mitigate for fish and habitat loss caused by the federal hydropower dam system on the Columbia River; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution be forwarded to the National Congress of American Indians.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2021 Virtual Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Portland, Oregon, on September 27-30, 2021, with a quorum present.


Leonard Forsman, President


Norma Jean Louie, Secretary