



2022 Mid-Year Convention Ferndale, WA

RESOLUTION #2022 – 22

Requesting the Federal Government to Establish a Federal Tribal Salmon Crisis Task Force comprised of Tribal Leaders and Intertribal Organizations to Address Salmon Recovery in the Northwest

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, and Northern California, and Alaska; and

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

WHEREAS, the Federal government has a Treaty responsibility and trust obligation to provide harvestable levels of all salmon stocks to meet the Treaty right to salmon and provide for a moderate income from fishing for indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, Tribal Treaty Rights to a sustainable abundance of harvestable salmon has declined as salmon populations have been decimated by lost and degraded habitat through non-tribal forest, agricultural, industrial and urban development and degraded water quality and quantity in critical salmon habitat and reduction of hatchery production required to mitigate for these losses. Federal trustees have not met their responsibility to enforce habitat protection laws, including the Clean Water Act (CWA), the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA), and the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA); and

WHEREAS, the Federal government has provided an increase in funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and is working to disseminate funding across numerous federal agencies and programs to address tribal needs including the need to provide fishing opportunities for tribes to exercise a meaningful Treaty Right to salmon harvest; and

WHEREAS, tribes have communicated for some time through the Treaty Rights at Risk initiative that salmon habitat protection and restoration and investment in increasing and modernizing hatchery infrastructure is critical to meeting the Treaty Right to provide harvestable abundance of salmon; and

WHEREAS, a need for better understanding of tribal trust responsibilities and coordination between federal agencies and the current funding processes water down tribal treaty rights and tribal sovereignty, place undue barriers to Tribes' ability to implement the necessary restoration and protection of salmon habitat restoration and hatchery improvements to provide salmon for tribal and non-tribal harvest and ecosystem services to food webs including imperiled Southern Resident Killer Whales; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI calls upon the Federal government to honor their treaty obligations and trust responsibility by establishing a Tribal Salmon Crisis Task Force to assist tribes in rebuilding salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the task force be co-chaired by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Interior and include representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other departments and agencies that have a role in salmon recovery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in order for the Federal government to begin to meet their treaty and trust obligations that the task force identify opportunities to direct the additional federal funding to tribes in a more expedited and streamlined manner to uphold tribal sovereignty and achieve the goal of sustainable abundance of harvestable salmon for tribes to meet the needs of their communities and preserve their cultural way of life since time immemorial; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in order for the Federal government to meet their treaty and trust obligations that the task force develop new programs and initiatives that prioritize and expedite tribal habitat and harvest actions to restore adult salmon returns to harvestable levels; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in order for the Federal government to meet their treaty and trust obligations to provide harvestable levels of salmon for a moderate income from fishing that the task force streamline permitting and regulatory processes to reduce burdens that impede salmon habitat recovery and hatchery operations; and

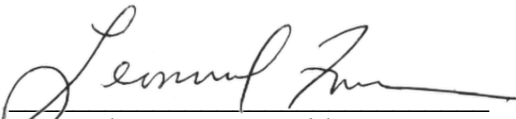
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Federal government establish a Tribal Salmon Crisis Task Force Advisory Committee, comprised of tribal leaders and tribal organizations with experience in salmon recovery; and

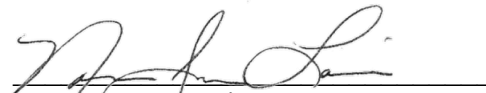
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress shall pass legislation and the Biden-Harris and subsequent Administrations shall establish a permanent Tribal Fishing Advisory Committee to advise the Federal government on activities that impact tribal and treaty fisheries; and

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

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2022 Mid-Year Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, at Silver Reef Casino Resort, Ferndale, Washington, May 16-19, 2022, with a quorum present.


Leonard Forsman, President


Norma Jean Louie, Secretary