



## **2023 Winter Convention Portland, Oregon**

### **RESOLUTION #2023 – 10**

#### **“SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IN THE NORTHWEST AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY”**

#### **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 assumed trust obligations to AI/AN tribes and people in perpetuity for healthcare, housing, education, public safety, land management, and other services established through over 300 treaties signed between sovereign tribal nations and the U.S. that are further enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, Supreme Court case law, federal legislation and regulations, and presidential executive orders; and

**WHEREAS**, the federal government’s trust responsibility for health extends to every federal agency and department—not just the Indian Health Service (IHS); and

**WHEREAS**, adequate housing is a social determinant of health, and all tribal communities should have access to housing that is accessible, safe, sanitary, and affordable, and

**WHEREAS**, homelessness, unstable housing, and overcrowded housing in Indian Country are strong determinants of health outcomes, whereby tribal housing issues and challenges exacerbate the health disparities and lower health status experienced by AI/AN people; and

**WHEREAS**, studies demonstrate that homelessness and substandard housing are risk factors for domestic violence, human trafficking, and missing and murdered Indigenous persons, substance abuse, mental illness, and other health problems in Indian Country; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Report on Housing Needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives in Tribal Areas that AI/AN communities are disproportionately impacted by housing issues, with roughly 23 percent of existing homes in tribal areas in need of repairs, upgrades, and reconstruction, compared to five percent of all U.S. households; and

**WHEREAS**, HUD reported in its Assessment of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing Needs Executive Summary that there are estimated to be up to 85,000 homeless AI/AN people living in tribal areas, contributing to significantly higher rates of overcrowded housing on tribal reservations and lands, with 16 percent of AI/AN people experiencing overcrowded housing compared to three percent of all U.S. households; and

**WHEREAS**, housing and homelessness issues are exacerbated by the fact that AI/AN communities face the highest rates of poverty of any demographic at 26.2 percent, compared to 14 percent throughout the U.S., with median household income levels 32 percent below the U.S. average according to the 2016 American Community Survey; and

**WHEREAS**, HUD acknowledged in their Fiscal Year 2017 President’s Budget that “the lack of housing and infrastructure in Indian Country is severe and widespread, and far exceeds the funding currently provided to tribes,” and that housing shortages adversely impact chronic issues of domestic violence, substance abuse, and poor educational outcomes in Indian Country; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress has not reauthorized the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) since 2013, which has two main programs: the Indian Housing Block Grant and Title VI loan guarantee, and has chronically underfunded housing maintenance, upgrades, and construction across Indian Country; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Water Alliance noted in its 2019 National Action Plan, that ensuring acceptable housing in Indian Country must entail overcoming infrastructure barriers, as AI/AN households are 19 times more likely than the rest of the U.S. population to live without indoor plumbing; and

**WHEREAS**, housing shortages in Indian Country worsen existing behavioral health disparities among AI/AN people, where suicide is already the second leading cause of death among AI/AN youth between the ages of five and 24, and the rate of AI/AN youth substance use disorder is already nearly double the U.S. average for youth as Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) data shows; and

**WHEREAS**, substandard housing and housing shortages in tribal communities continue to exacerbate the ongoing and pervasive healthcare provider shortages experienced across the Indian health system; and

**WHEREAS**, the persistent practice of U.S. federal agencies in providing funding opportunities to states or other governmental entities, and excluding tribal governments and organizations from funding, creates barriers to AI/AN communities obtaining accessible, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress holds a critical opportunity to reauthorize NAHASDA to support AI/AN homeownership, affordable multi-family rental opportunities, housing counseling, and loan guarantees—many programs which support AI/AN families and tribes; now

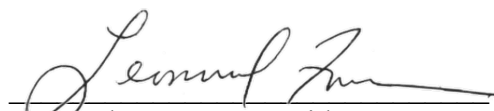
**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the ATNI strongly supports addressing the housing crisis in the Northwest as a public health priority given its outsized negative impact on health outcomes and status among AI/AN people, and calls upon the U.S. Congress, Executive Administration, and federal agencies to remove barriers to funding, and provide specific tribal funding set-asides for tribal governments, and tribal organizations, in all funding offered, as a part of the trust responsibility; and

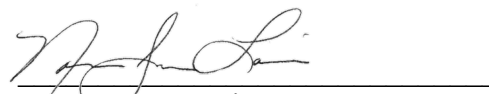
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI calls upon Congress, the Administration, and federal agencies to provide direct, recurring, inflation-responsive, and sustainable funding to tribes and tribal organizations to end the housing crisis in the Northwest and throughout Indian Country; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that ATNI is hereby authorized and directed to execute this resolution and any documents connected therewith.

### **CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2023 Winter Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Portland, Oregon, on January 22-26, 2023 with a quorum approving.

  
Leonard Forsman, President

  
Norma Jean Louie, Secretary