



2023 Winter Convention Portland, Oregon

RESOLUTION #2023 – 12

“OPPOSING WASHINGTON STATE SENATE BILL 5297 CONCERNING SALMON FISHERIES OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER”

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, tribes are leaders in effective best practices for environmental sciences and traditional ecological knowledge to serve as good stewards of fisheries and habitat recovery and enhancement, which serve as indigenous first foods for our way of life; and

WHEREAS, tribes with interest in the health or co-management of the Columbia River fishery oppose SB 5297 on the grounds that it creates a state law targeting gillnets as an unfavorable harvest management policy and a harmful type of fishing gear; and

WHEREAS, SB 5297 purports to be for conservation purposes, but it does not add additional fish or forego any harvest of any fish, and instead reallocates harvest allocations from commercial to recreational catch based on political preferences instead of technical expertise; and

WHEREAS, under the scheme proposed by SB 5297 the allocation of Endangered Species Act (“ESA”) impacts would be transferred from the non-tribal commercial fishery to the non-tribal recreational fishery. This transfer will not achieve its stated conservation purpose as the mortality of wild fish will actually increase because the sport fishery will likely exceed allowed ESA impacts due to mortality of fish from multiple catch and release encounters; and

WHEREAS, it is not appropriate for non-governmental organizations and the state legislature to intervene in the co-management of the fishery resources; and

WHEREAS, the treaty tribes are Columbia River fishery co-managers; and

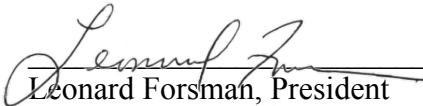
WHEREAS, SB 5297 stigmatizes gillnetting as a type of fishing gear and would remove salmon advocates while distracting from solutions for known threats like fish barriers, degraded habitat in tributaries and estuaries, predation, and warming water temperatures; now

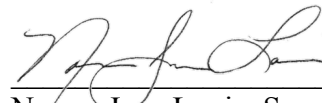
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the ATNI supports and stands with the tribes opposing the proposed Washington State ban on non-treaty gillnet fishing on the Columbia River; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the ATNI also calls for the sovereign Co-Managers established under the case law of *U.S. v. Washington* and *U.S. v. Oregon* to strive for alternate solutions for prioritizing the protection of hatchery production, increasing fishery returns, removing fish barriers, decreasing predation, and responding to the human-caused habitat degradation.

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