



## **2023 Annual Convention Grand Mound, Washington**

### **RESOLUTION #2023 – 40**

#### **“CLIMATE CHANGE RELATED HEALTH, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING DISPARITIES”**

#### **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, 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**, Climate change represents an existential threat to the health, safety, welfare, economic and cultural wellbeing of our people and impacts Tribal Nations' access to traditional foods, our economic interests, traditional medicinal, community health and wellbeing and will impact these for countless generations if left unmitigated, and it is the younger

generations and those still to come who will more fully bear the significant brunt of a warming planet; and

**WHEREAS**, tribal Nations have unique connection to the natural environment and climate change is threatening natural resources and ecosystems that are essential to our people's livelihoods, food sources, and cultural practices; and

**WHEREAS**, inherent tribal rights and treaty rights are impacted by climate change, including through the inconsistent shifts of seasons and natural resource habitability ranges, rising temperatures, ocean acidification, drought, wildfires, as well as adaptation, mitigation and resilience efforts for future generations to come; and

**WHEREAS**, our traditional homelands, reservations and Alaska Native villages and communities, are connected to traditional places and resources, which challenge our mobility and flexibility to respond to current and future climatic changes that already impact our ways of life which causes difficult health, social and economic conditions that may be further exacerbated by any additional increase in climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, tribal populations have higher rates of certain medical conditions than the general U.S. population and these include asthma, cancers, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, mental health, addictions and dementia and these chronic medical conditions put individuals at more risk for illness and injury as the climate changes; and

**WHEREAS**, institutional barriers can affect Tribes' abilities to adapt to climate change and these barriers can limit Tribes' access and control over traditional lands and natural resources that will be increasingly impacted by climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, many tribal populations lack sufficient or reliable infrastructure and cannot always access essential services, such as transportation, drinking water, sanitation, disaster response, and health care, which limits the ability to plan for and respond to climate-related threats; and

**WHEREAS**, that ATNI urges immediate action to address the environmental and sovereign interests of our people and the serious and catastrophic effects of climate change upon the health, economic and social wellbeing of tribal citizens and their descendants and threaten our communities and future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, we call upon the Administration to ensure an 'all of government approach' to our concerns and establish a Climate Change Program Office of Tribal Affairs, and cause the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity (OCCHE), the United States Department of Agriculture, (USDA), Office of Energy and Environmental Policy (OEEP), and any other divisions within the Health and Human Services, (HHS) including the Indian Health Service, (IHS) and Department of the Interior, (DOI) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and any others, to work collaboratively together with us; and


**WHEREAS**, as sovereign nations, we must be fully included, consulted and have a seat at the table to ensure tribal centric climate change mitigation planning and decision-making on these matters with any and all Federal, agencies and the Administration, and we must be provided adequate opportunities for tribal consultation on climate change mitigation strategies so as for our concerns to be addressed as expeditiously as possible, and any lack of consultation and transparency on these matters violates our inherent sovereign rights and responsibilities; now


**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that ATNI ask that the current and future Administrations take these immediate actions to adequately protect tribal environmental and sovereign interests, to respect and protect tribal health, economic, environmental, and social wellbeing, sovereignty, and self-determination; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that ATNI do everything necessary to protect, restore and enhance today and future generations in Tribal and non-Tribal communities from climate change and the catastrophic impacts on health and economic wellbeing or any increase in disparities as we cannot sacrifice our futures or of those yet to be born.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2023 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Mound, Washington on September 18 – 21, 2023, with a quorum present.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Leonard Forsman, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Norma Jean Louie, Secretary