



**ATNI Annual 2025 Convention  
Suquamish, Washington**

**RESOLUTION # 2025 – 49**

**“OPPOSING THE RESCISSION OF THE 2001 ROADLESS AREA  
CONSERVATION RULE AND DEMANDING MEANINGFUL  
GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION”**

**PREAMBLE**

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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 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 the representatives and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, the ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and Indian tribal governments in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, creating opportunities for Indian Nations, preservation of tribal sovereignty and protection of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of ATNI; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule protects approximately 44.7 million acres of National Forest System lands that encompass ancestral territories, treaty-protected resources, and sacred sites of ATNI member tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 23, 2025, the Secretary of Agriculture announced the intent to rescind the Roadless Rule without any prior consultation with affected Tribal governments, in direct violation of USDA Departmental Regulation 1350-002, Executive Order 13175, and the federal trust responsibility; and

**WHEREAS**, the Notice of Intent (NOI) published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2025, provides only a 21-day public comment period ending September 19, 2025, which is wholly inadequate for meaningful Tribal engagement on a decision affecting millions of acres of ancestral territories; and

**WHEREAS**, USDA Departmental Regulation 1350-002 (April 30, 2024) specifically prohibits promulgating any regulation with Tribal implications without first consulting "with Tribal officials early in the process of developing the proposed regulation"; and

**WHEREAS**, inventoried roadless areas protect treaty-reserved rights to hunt, fish, gather, and conduct traditional and ceremonial practices that are not privileges but retained sovereign rights predating the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, these roadless areas encompass Traditional Cultural Properties, Traditional Cultural Districts, sacred sites, and cultural landscapes integral to Tribal identity, including ceremonial sites, traditional gathering areas, burial grounds, and ancestral villages; and

**WHEREAS**, roadless areas protect critical headwaters and riparian systems sustaining treaty-reserved fisheries, with scientific evidence demonstrating that roads contribute up to 90% of sediment pollution that destroys spawning habitat and degrades water quality essential for salmon and other culturally significant species; and

**WHEREAS**, for Alaska Native Tribes, the proposed rescission threatens federally protected subsistence rights under Title VIII of ANILCA without the required Section 810 analysis; and

**WHEREAS**, inventoried roadless areas serve as critical climate refugia storing approximately 445 million tons of sequestered carbon, with their protection essential for Tribal climate adaptation strategies and cultural survival; and

**WHEREAS**, road construction in inventoried roadless areas dramatically increases human-caused wildfire risk, as humans cause nearly 90% of wildfire ignitions and fire likelihood diminishes with distance from roads, while road corridors facilitate invasive species that intensify fire frequency and severity; and such increased wildfires pose devastating and irreversible threats to tribal communities by destroying irreplaceable sacred sites and ancient forests, degrading treaty-reserved fisheries and wildlife habitat, eliminating traditional gathering areas and medicinal plants requiring centuries to regenerate, creating hazardous air quality that prevents ceremonies and subsistence activities; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed rescission raises serious environmental justice concerns as Tribal communities would bear disproportionate impacts while receiving none of the economic benefits, compounding existing disparities in health, economic opportunity, and environmental quality; and

**WHEREAS**, the rescission creates unresolved conflicts with the Tribal Forest Protection Act, National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 requirements, Cultural Heritage Cooperation

Authority provisions, and existing forest plan components developed through years of collaboration; and

**WHEREAS**, the Forest Service's own "Strengthening Tribal Consultations and Nation-to-Nation Relationships Action Plan" commits to a minimum 120-day Tribal consultation period for national-level actions; and

**WHEREAS**, meaningful consultation requires leadership-level engagement, adequate time for Tribal review, regional sessions, written documentation of outcomes, and demonstration of how Tribal input influenced decision-making; now

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that ATNI unequivocally opposes the proposed rescission of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule as a violation of treaty rights, trust responsibilities, and federal law; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI demands immediate initiation of government-to-government consultation, including:

- Direct consultation between Tribal leadership and the Secretary of Agriculture
- Minimum 120-day consultation period beginning immediately
- Regional consultation sessions accessible to all affected Tribes
- Funding for Tribal participation, including travel and technical assistance
- Written documentation of all consultation outcomes
- Designation of requesting Tribes as cooperating agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI demands extension of the Notice of Intent (NOI) scoping comment period to at least 90 days to allow adequate Tribal review and input on this complex action affecting millions of acres; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that any future forest management decisions must include comprehensive analysis of impacts to treaty rights, trust responsibilities, cultural resources, subsistence uses, water quality, and climate resilience, with alternatives that enhance Tribal co-management which was affirmed in federal court rather than eliminate protections; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI calls upon the Administration to honor Secretarial Order 3403 on Joint Stewardship by developing collaborative management approaches that respect Tribal sovereignty and incorporate Indigenous Knowledge; and

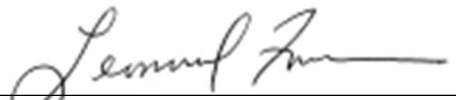
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI member Tribes will utilize all available means—legal, political, and social—to prevent this destructive reversal of conservation policy and protect irreplaceable natural and cultural heritage for future generations; and

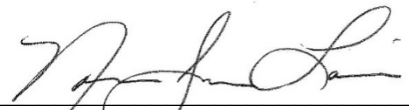
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be forwarded to the President of the United States, Secretary of Agriculture, Chief of the Forest Service, all Northwest Congressional delegations, and the National Congress of American; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this will be the policy of ATNI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolutions.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing Resolution was adopted at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians 2025 Annual Convention held at the Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort in Suquamish, Washington on October 12-16, 2025, with a quorum present.

  
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Leonard Forsman, President

  
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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary