



2026 Annual Convention Snoqualmie, Washington

RESOLUTION # 2026 – 034

“ENDORSEMENT OF THE TIERED SOVEREIGN DATA FRAMEWORK (TSDF) AS AN AFFILIATED TRIBES OF NORTHWEST INDIANS (ATNI) -RECOGNIZED STANDARD FOR INDIGENOUS DATA SOVEREIGNTY”

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 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, 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, 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, ATNI has a demonstrated history of addressing data-related concerns through prior resolutions, including, but not limited to: Resolution #25-41 (For the Development

of an ATNI Task Force on Data Centers, 2025 Annual Convention); Resolution #21-04 (Data Sharing and Cooperative Agreements to Improve the Response to Missing and Murdered American Indian and Alaskan Native Women, 2021 Winter Convention); Resolution #15-53 (Prohibit States from Certain Data Collection of Tribes and Tribal Members, 2015 Annual Convention); Resolution #15-60 (Support for Data Collection for the Development of FirstNet, 2015 Annual Convention); and Resolution #09-69 (Appropriate Access to IHS Data for IHS Funded Epidemiology Centers, Tribes, and Tribal Organizations, 2009 Annual Convention); and

WHEREAS, for centuries, Indigenous Peoples have experienced a colonial paradigm in research and data systems characterized by extractive practices that treat Indigenous knowledge as a resource to be mined rather than a relationship to be honored, resulting in the dispossession of knowledge, the disruption of intergenerational knowledge transmission, and the perpetuation of deficit-based framings of Indigenous communities; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Data Sovereignty refers to the inherent right of Indigenous Peoples to govern the collection, ownership, and application of their own data and extends to data concerning Indigenous Peoples, their lands, waters, and more-than-human relations, including collective data and knowledge generated across generations and belonging to the collective; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) affirms the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination (Article 3), to participate in decision-making (Article 18), to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (Article 19), to determine their own development priorities (Article 23), and to maintain, control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions (Article 31); and

WHEREAS, the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics) and the First Nations principles of OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) provide foundational guidance for the governance of Indigenous data, yet are principles-based frameworks that require operationalization through enforceable classification systems and technical standards; and

WHEREAS, the IEEE 2890-2025: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Recommended Practice for Provenance of Indigenous Peoples' Data, published November 14, 2025 and developed through a five-year process with Indigenous leadership at all stages, is the first international standard developed for Indigenous Peoples' data, establishing common parameters for provenance that facilitate Indigenous Peoples' governance, decision-making, participation, collaboration, and engagement in current and future uses of that data; and

WHEREAS, the rapid proliferation of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies presents urgent and heightened risks to Indigenous Data Sovereignty, including the unauthorized incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge into training datasets, the reproduction or recombination of sacred or restricted knowledge, the perpetuation of deficit-based framings, and the transformation or reuse of Indigenous data beyond the use of Indigenous governance; and

WHEREAS, data sovereignty cannot be achieved through data governance alone that Tribally-controlled storage connected to cloud services governed by foreign law may be exposed to external jurisdiction; and that algorithms transforming data beyond the reach of Tribal governance can undermine self-determination; and

WHEREAS, the Tiered Sovereign Data Framework (TSDF), establishes a four-tier data classification system-T0: Open/Public, T1: Community Network, T2: Negotiated Partner, T3: Sovereign Restricted-that operationalizes CARE, OCAP®, UNDRIP, and IEEE 2890-2025 into specific, enforceable classifications with technical implementation guidance across all four sovereignty domains; and

WHEREAS, the TSDF was developed within ATNI through deliberate engagement at the intersection of climate adaptation, data science, and Tribal self-determination and reflects deep consideration of Indigenous rights, values, and governance needs as expressed by ATNI member Tribes over decades of intergovernmental coordination and climate resilience work; and

WHEREAS, the TSDF establishes a default-to-sovereign (T3) classification principle recognizing the potential asymmetric and irreversible harms of under-classification and requires that only authorized human decision-makers may downgrade classifications, ensuring that automated systems may protect but never unilaterally expose Indigenous knowledge; and

WHEREAS, the TSDF provides differentiated external partner accountability standards addressing corporate entities, academic institutions, federal and governmental agencies, and small organizations, with requirements proportionate to extraction risk and institutional capacity, including provisions addressing institutional acknowledgment of Indigenous data sovereignty, publication review rights, and binding arbitration under Tribal jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the TSDF is explicitly designed to respect the diversity of Indigenous governance systems, specifying what must be governed but not how specific Indigenous governance bodies must be structured, and nothing in the framework overrides, diminishes, or supersedes the sovereign authority of any individual Tribe to determine its own data governance policies, protocols, and laws; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI formally endorses and recognizes the Tiered Sovereign Data Framework (TSDF), authorizes its release as version 1.0, and as an ATNI-recognized standard for Indigenous data sovereignty, affirming its four-tier classification system, its alignment with CARE Principles, OCAP® Principles, UNDRIP, and IEEE 2890-2025, and its Convergence Systems Architecture addressing Data, Network, Digital, and Computational sovereignty domains; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this endorsement acknowledges the critical and growing need for information sharing among Tribes, between Tribes and research partners, and between Tribes and governmental agencies, and that the TSDF provides a principled mechanism for such sharing that protects Indigenous knowledge while enabling the collaborative work necessary to address climate change, public health, natural resource management, and other challenges facing ATNI member Tribes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution and the endorsement herein shall in no way obligate any Tribe to adopt, implement, or incorporate the TSDF into its own governance; rather, this endorsement serves as a statement of confidence that the TSDF was developed from within ATNI, with deep consideration and in accordance with Indigenous values, such that individual Tribes may identify it as a resource authorized by ATNI resolution and make their own sovereign determination regarding its use; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the TSDF is released under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share-Alike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0), which protects the framework from commercial exploitation while enabling Tribes, Indigenous organizations, research partners, and governmental agencies to share, adapt, remix, transform, and build upon the framework to meet their own governance needs, laws, and policies, provided that adaptations maintain proper attribution and are shared under the same license terms; and that this release is affirmed as consistent with ATNI's values of openness and self-determination by allowing Tribes and partner organizations to freely utilize the framework in their work, share it with partners, adapt it to their specific needs, or improve upon it and tailor it to their own laws, policies, and governance protocols, provided that such adaptations maintain attribution and are shared under the same noncommercial terms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI encourages its member Tribes to review the TSDF and consider its applicability to their own data governance needs, and encourages federal, state, and academic partners working with ATNI member Tribes to familiarize themselves with the framework as a reference for respectful and sovereignty-affirming data practices.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this will be the policy of ATNI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution(s).

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing Resolution was adopted at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians 2026 Annual Convention held at the Snoqualmie Casino and Hotel in Snoqualmie, Washington, on September 13-17, 2026, with a quorum present.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary