



2026 Annual Convention Snoqualmie, Washington

RESOLUTION # 2026 – 048

“SUPPORTING PASSING A SENATE BILL TO MAKE TRIBES ELIGIBLE FOR CONSERVATION FUTURES”

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, Tribal Nations have stewarded the lands, waters, fish, wildlife, forests, and other natural resources of the Pacific Northwest since time immemorial, utilizing Indigenous

knowledge, cultural practices, and systems of land and resource management that have sustained ecosystems and communities for generations; and

WHEREAS, Tribal Nations possess inherent sovereignty and have a fundamental role in determining the future of their lands, waters, cultural resources, and communities; and

WHEREAS, Washington State's Conservation Futures program provides counties with a mechanism to levy property taxes for the acquisition and preservation of interests in real property for conservation and other public purposes; and RCW 84.34.240 establishes the statutory framework governing Conservation Futures funds and their use by counties; and

WHEREAS, Conservation Futures has become an important public investment in the protection of open space, working lands, habitat, forests, waterways, and other lands of public interest throughout Washington State; and

WHEREAS, Washington State's existing Conservation Futures framework excludes Tribal governments as eligible partners and beneficiaries of this conservation funding, limiting the ability of Tribal Nations to directly utilize these public resources for the protection, restoration, acquisition, and stewardship of lands and resources important to their communities, cultures, treaty rights, and future generations; and

WHEREAS, Tribal Nations and their citizens contribute to Washington's economy and tax base while Tribal governments have historically been excluded from or limited in their ability to access many public conservation investments and programs that affect their ancestral homelands; and

WHEREAS, ATNI believes that excluding Tribal governments from meaningful access to Conservation Futures funding perpetuates a system in which public conservation investments can occur within Tribal homelands and areas of cultural significance without providing Tribal governments with equitable opportunities to lead, participate in, or benefit from those investments; and

WHEREAS, amending RCW 84.34.240 Conservation Futures, to include tribes as eligible entities to receive funds from this program, would strengthen government-to-government relationships between Washington State, counties, and Tribal Nations and would support collaborative conservation, restoration, climate resilience, salmon recovery, habitat protection, cultural resource protection, and the preservation of lands important to future generations; and

WHEREAS, the 2027 Washington State Legislative Session provides an important opportunity to amend state law to ensure that Tribal governments can meaningfully participate in and benefit from Conservation Futures; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI supports amendments to Washington State law, including RCW 84.34, as necessary to establish clear eligibility for Tribal governments to receive Conservation Futures funding for eligible conservation purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such legislation should recognize the unique status of Tribal governments and should not require Tribal Nations to relinquish, compromise, or waive any treaty rights, reserved rights, sovereign authority, or governmental jurisdiction as a condition of accessing Conservation Futures resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI encourages Washington Tribal Nations, counties, conservation organizations, environmental organizations, agricultural organizations, and other allies to work collaboratively to advance legislation that expands Tribal participation in Conservation Futures while respecting Tribal sovereignty and government-to-government relationships; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI shall support efforts to identify and engage legislative champions in both chambers of the Washington State Legislature and shall encourage the introduction, advancement, and passage of legislation during the 2027 legislative session that achieves the goals outlined in this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI calls upon the Washington State Legislature to recognize Tribal Nations as essential partners in conservation and natural resource stewardship and to advance legislation in the 2027 Washington State Legislative Session that ensures Tribal governments have equitable and meaningful access to Conservation Futures resources; and

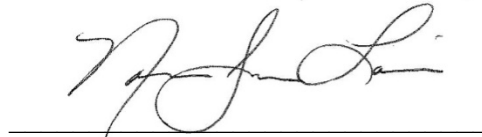
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this will be the policy of ATNI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution(s).

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