



## **2009 Annual Conference Tacoma, Washington**

### **RESOLUTION #09 - 62**

#### **"REQUEST FOR EPA ADMINISTRATOR LISA JACKSON TO RETURN TO AMERICAN INDIAN ENVIRONMENT OFFICE DIRECTOR AS A POLITICAL APPOINTEE"**

### **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 representatives of and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians 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 environment, cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians; and

**WHEREAS**, the tribal lands of the Sovereign American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes across the nation provide important habitat for hundreds of native North American species,

including over 525 species of plants and animals recognized by the US government and Tribes as requiring special protection; and

**WHEREAS**, ATNI affirms that Tribes are important partners for the United States that can provide key wisdom on the environment and its impact on our natural world; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States has a unique legal relationship with Indian tribal governments as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes, executive orders, and court decisions; and

**WHEREAS**, since the formation of the Union, the United States has recognized Indian tribes as domestic dependent nations under its protection; and

**WHEREAS**, in treaties, our Nation has guaranteed the right of Indian tribes to self-government; and

**WHEREAS**, as domestic dependent nations, Indian tribes exercise inherent sovereign powers over their members and territory; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States shall work with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis to address issues concerning Indian tribal self-government, protection of Indian Reservations and trust resources, and Indian tribal treaty and other rights.; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States shall establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with Indian tribal governments in the development of environmental regulatory practices on Indian Reservations that significantly or uniquely affect their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1984 developed the American Indian Environmental Office, under the Indian Environmental Act for the purpose of ensuring Indian Country is represented in the development and implementation of sound environmental programs that provide safe and healthy communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the EPA furthered the commitment to Tribe's by establishing the American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO); and

**WHEREAS**, the AIEO Appointed Director, was originally located within the EPA Office of Water and is in the process of transitioning to the Office of International Affairs, thus providing the message that Indian Tribes are sovereign nations; and

**WHEREAS**, because the AIEO sets the tone of EPA's Indian Policy, it is important that the Director of AIEO reflects the environmental policies of the Obama Administration; and

**WHEREAS**, since the establishment of the AIEO in 1994, the Director's position has been a political one chosen by incoming Administrations. In early 2008, that position was changed to a career Senior Executive Service (SES) position; and

**WHEREAS**, EPA's National Tribal Caucus, National Environmental Council and National Congress of American Indians, and Tribes expressed verbally and in various transition plans to EPA's Administrator and the Obama Administration objecting to this change, asserting that the decision was made without tribal consultation; and


**WHEREAS**, ATNI recommends that the Administrator return this position back to a political appointment and consult with Tribes in the early stages of this important decision that reflects the Obama's Administration's commitment to treat the First Americans with honor and respect; now


**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that ATNI requests EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson to return the AIEO Director position from a Senior Executive Service (SES) to a political appointment; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI supports strengthening alliances with the EPA to ensure safe and healthy communities and we value the relationship that has been sustained through the efforts of the AIEO for the past 24 years.

#### **CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2009 Annual Conference of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center, Tacoma, Washington on September 21 – 24, 2009 with, a quorum present.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Cladoosby, President

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