



2011 Annual Conference Tulalip, Washington

RESOLUTION #11 - 77

"TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND CLIMATE CHANGE"

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 to 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, the ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes 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 the ATNI; and

WHEREAS, climate change is a threat to American Indian culture, resources, and wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, American Indians are entrusted by our ancestors with traditional ecological knowledge that has been an accumulation of centuries of knowledge , practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission; and

WHEREAS; American Indians are the first impacted by global climate change for the rest of humanity; and today climate change is drastically affecting indigenous peoples' hunting, fishing, gathering, economic infrastructure, reservation locations, usual and accustomed areas and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, primary impacts on American Indians are prolonged droughts or excessive rainfall causing floods, extreme weather shifts brought on by warming, diminishing and disappearing sources of fresh water, changes in habitat for wildlife, and marine resources, that impact cultural and treaty reserved rights, federal/tribal agreement rights, threatens the sustainability for our communities and impacts on first food sources; and

WHEREAS, Native rights are place-based rights, based on historical, legally recognized and longtime occupation of Indigenous territories. Indigenous nations are in a unique venerable position in regards to climate change. Their land base provides few opportunities to relocate or expand or cope with changing climate. Treaty rights and reserved rights are fixed to specific parcels of land, so that it is unclear what tribal rights to resources might shift away from their reserved lands; and

WHEREAS, climate change shifts and disrupts plant and animal habitats, and in doing so forces cultures to adapt to these conditions, or risk elimination. Species adapt to rising temperatures by shifting their ranges farther north or to higher elevations. Many species driven entirely out of their habitats and feeding areas may face extinction. Other invasive species are migrating into new areas and are competing with or displacing native and culturally important species. Shifting conditions may also directly threaten species, such as in the "dead zone" on the U.S. Pacific Northwest coast, where fish and crabs are being starved of oxygen by wild swings in ocean upwelling of phytoplankton. The Midwest American Indians are facing the migration of their wildlife, as their moose have left their traditional and reservation territory as a result of the impact of climate change on the habitat. Furthermore, treaty-guaranteed rights to hunt, fish and gather may be rendered moot by these changes, or may adapt by transferring harvesting rights, for example, from salmon to tuna; and

WHEREAS, the United States has affirmed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and American Indians can also use diplomatic rights associated with government-to-government relationships. Indigenous NGO demands have historically made recommendations at each conference of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and

WHEREAS, the United States has affirmed American Indian sovereignty and jurisdiction over our cultural identity and heritage. American Indians should implement their sovereign standing to promote federal actions to prevent, mitigate and adapt to climate change; and

WHEREAS, the current Administration has taken strides that support Tribal measures to cope with climate change, including, but not limited to, the November 5, 2009, Executive Memo directing agency heads to submit a detailed plan of actions that agencies will take to implement the policies; Executive Order 13175 - Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments; and Department of Interior Secretarial Order 3289 - Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resource; and

WHEREAS; American Indians are sovereign nations and because of this incorporate traditional ecological knowledge, legal, political and western science in their governance decision making and with this experience we are prepared to be co-managers in addressing adaptation and mitigation policy and laws impacting trust resources and this capacity will provide direction for agencies, change laws and policy to recognize tribal rights to shifting species and resources. Furthermore, American Indians have the capacity to be co-managers in any government climate planning, or mitigation or adaptation measures that affect tribal resources, lands or wellbeing.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the ATNI does hereby call upon the United States, its agencies, scientists and all relevant organizations involved in planning for and implementing actions to address climate change to recognize that the Tribes are sovereign nations, with their own governments, customary laws, courts, and other forms of decision making that should be recognized and respected; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ATNI calls upon the United States, its agencies, scientists and all relevant organizations to bring the Tribes into the processes to address climate change that impinge upon Tribal rights and interests from the very start, and at all levels; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ATNI requests that the United States, its agencies, scientists and all relevant organizations recognize and respect Tribal traditions, ordinances and expectations regarding access to and respectful use of their traditional ecological knowledge, based on mutual respect for other's traditions, and principles and rights contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, such as the right to free, prior and informed consent, the treaties and other constructive agreements; and

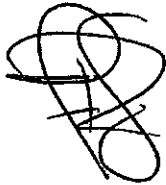
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ATNI requests that the United States, its agencies, scientists and all relevant organizations recognize, build and enhance Tribal capacity to lead on climate change issues; to provide adequate and proportional funding for Tribal climate change adaptation and mitigation; to provide for emergency funding for dangerous climate-related impacts such as severe coastal erosion and flooding; to substantially increase funding to address ecosystem-based approaches for maintaining Tribal access to First Foods, species at risk,

critical habitat and culturally important places; to ensure continuity in policy and governance related to Tribal rights and interests in climate change adaptation and mitigation; and to increase general awareness of Tribal impacts, perspectives, actions, rights and interests; and

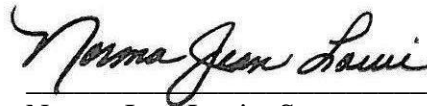
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ATNI urges the United States government agencies, taskforces, and partner organizations comply with and implement the November 5, 2009, Executive Memo, Executive Order 13175 and Secretarial Order 3289, and partner with American Indians as sovereign nations as co-decision makers all policy, regulations and laws related to climate change on or off each nation's respected reservations, ceded lands and usual and accustomed areas.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2011 Annual Conference of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the Tulalip Resort Casino in Tulalip, Washington, on September 19-22, 2011, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary