

## Template for a Tribal Resolution: Climate Change Adaptation Initiative

*This resolution template was created by the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) to serve as a model on which tribes can base their own resolution for a tribal climate change initiative. The template is not a “one-size-fits-all” solution, and users are encouraged to modify the template to better represent the needs and priorities of the tribe. This guide will help users complete and personalize their own resolutions. Users are encouraged to review the example resolutions provided on page four of this guide for further reference.*

*Please direct questions and feedback to either of the Climate Change Program Co-Managers, Nikki Cooley ([Nikki.Cooley@nau.edu](mailto:Nikki.Cooley@nau.edu), 928-523-7046) or Karen Cozzetto ([Karen.Cozzetto@nau.edu](mailto:Karen.Cozzetto@nau.edu), 928-523-6758). If your tribe uses this template, please email a copy of the final resolution to ITEP for our reference.*

**Header:** The title should be altered to reflect the format of the tribe’s official documents as well as the focus of the resolution. Other terms that may be suitable in the title include:

- Climate Action
- Resilience
- Sustainability
- Other phrases that convey this intent

**Body:** Throughout the template, there are words or phrases in brackets that the user should replace with their own information. For example, wherever the term “[Tribe]” occurs, the user should input the name of their tribe. If the template is being used by another type of tribal entity, such as an Alaska Native Corporation, use the organization’s name. Also, if the tribe gives the resolution a different title, that title should be inserted in place of [Climate Change Adaptation Initiative] throughout the resolution. The user will need to include tribe-specific information for the following paragraphs:

### “WHEREAS...”

- **1<sup>st</sup> WHEREAS:** This paragraph provides a statement regarding the tribe’s sovereignty and legal rights. Users may replace the provided text with official language used by their tribes in resolutions. If this is a resolution by an entity other than a federally recognized tribe, the text will need to be changed to reflect this.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> WHEREAS:** This paragraph identifies how the resolution will fit into existing tribal law. Replace [Code under which the initiative will be housed] with the title of the section of tribal law where the resolution will be inserted.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> WHEREAS:** This paragraph identifies climate change as a threat to the tribe and argues for the resolution’s importance. Replace [local climate change impacts] with a brief list of potential climate change impacts that could be felt *locally* by the tribe. Some research may be required to determine which impacts should be highlighted.
  - Resources for regional climate change impacts on tribes are available on the ITEP website at [www4.nau.edu/tribalclimatechange/resources/impacts.asp](http://www4.nau.edu/tribalclimatechange/resources/impacts.asp)

- If you would like to include stronger language about climate change, you may replace this 3<sup>rd</sup> WHEREAS with the following statements, or you may want to incorporate language used in the example resolutions on page four of this guide.

**WHEREAS**, there is overwhelming scientific evidence of climate change driven in part by the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere; and

**WHEREAS**, the effects of climate change, evident on global and regional scales, may significantly impact the [Tribe] due to [local climate change impacts], and other associated effects on the local environment, natural resources, and infrastructure on which the [Tribe] has traditionally relied; and

**WHEREAS**, the effects of climate change have the potential to negatively impact the economic, cultural, and social welfare of the [Tribe] community; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the duty and responsibility of the [Tribe] to provide for the well-being of the community, its local environment, natural resources, and social systems; and

**WHEREAS**, through traditional knowledge, practice, experience, and relationships with nature [Tribe] has an important role in defending and healing the natural environment; and

**WHEREAS**, the [Tribe] has considered the potential and current impacts of climate change on its people, environment, and resources, and has registered these impacts as a concern; and

- **5<sup>th</sup> WHEREAS:** This paragraph identifies the department of the tribal government that will take responsibility for leading the proposed initiative. Replace [Department] with the name of the office that will coordinate the tribe’s climate change adaptation efforts.
- **6<sup>th</sup> WHEREAS:** This paragraph identifies actions that will be implemented under the resolution. Replace [implement proposed actions] with a list of strategies the tribe intends to pursue. If actions have not yet been identified, state that the department will study and propose actions. Actions can include but are not limited to:
  - Assess the potential climate change impacts on the tribe
  - Develop a climate change adaptation plan that identifies strategies and actions to address the climate change impacts
  - Develop a communication strategy to inform the community about climate change
  - Resources for adaptation planning are available on the ITEP website at <http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/tcc/Resources/adaptation>

- **7<sup>th</sup> WHEREAS:** This paragraph states that the responsible department will seek funding for the initiative. If funding is already available, state that the initiative is funded and state the source. The tribal government may also wish to see a proposed budget for the initiative.

**“NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED...”**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Resolution:** This paragraph identifies adaptation strategies for potential effects of climate change on the tribe. Replace [policies and strategies] with a list of adaptation actions the tribe plans to pursue.
  - Resources for developing a climate change adaptation strategy are available on the ITEP website at <http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/tcc/Resources/adaptation>
- This resolution template focuses on climate change adaptation. If you would like to include provisions for mitigation strategies as well, you may insert a new paragraph after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Resolution discussed in the previous bullet. You may copy the following language into the resolution:

To develop policies and strategies for reducing the [Tribe’s] contribution to climate change, including [policies and strategies]; and

Replace [policies and strategies] with a list of mitigation actions the tribe plans to pursue. Actions can include but are not limited to:

- Conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory
- Plan and implement strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Develop and adopt renewable energy
- Resources for developing a climate change mitigation strategy are available on the ITEP website at <http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/tcc/Resources/adaptation>

**Closing:** The closing statement and signatures should be altered to reflect the format of the tribe’s official documents.

## Example Resolutions

For further reference, please review these resolutions to see how other tribes and tribal organizations have framed resolutions regarding climate change. Some of the resolutions are directly related to tribal climate change adaptation, while others have a different focus but have relevant language that you may want to include in your tribe's resolution.

- **Resolution #PDX-11-036: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Climate Change** (*National Congress of American Indians*)  
NCAI Resolution calling for the U.S. to include tribes in all climate change policies, programs and activities; to recognize and respect the use of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK); to build tribal capacity to address climate change issues; to provide funding to tribes; and to consult with tribes. The resolution highlights the importance of TEK and tribal rights. November 2011.  
<http://www.ncai.org/resources/resolutions/traditional-ecological-knowledge-and-climate-change>
- **Resolution #11-77: Traditional Knowledge and Climate Change** (*Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians*)  
ATNI resolution calling on the United States to recognize tribal sovereignty, to include tribes in climate change initiatives, to recognize and respect traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), and to build tribal capacity and provide funding to tribes. This resolution provides strong language for describing climate change impacts on tribes. September 2011.  
<https://www.atntribes.org/resolutions/traditional-knowledge-and-climate-change>
- **Proclamation of the Swinomish Indian Senate on a Swinomish Climate Change Initiative** (*Swinomish Indian Tribal Community*)  
Proclamation for a climate change initiative for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community in northwestern Washington. The proclamation describes potential climate change impacts and identifies actions to be taken. These include assessing climate change impacts; developing policies, strategies, goals, and actions to address the impacts; communicating and coordinating with external entities; and communicating with the tribal community. October 2007.  
[www.swinomish-nsn.gov/climate\\_change/Docs/Swinomish%20Climate%20Change%20Proclamation.pdf](http://www.swinomish-nsn.gov/climate_change/Docs/Swinomish%20Climate%20Change%20Proclamation.pdf)
- **Alaska Native Tribes and Villages – Climate Change Resolutions** (*Native American Rights Fund*)  
A series of resolutions by Alaskan Native tribes and villages calling on the United States government to reduce its carbon emissions and to promote the development and adoption of renewable energy. These resolutions provide good examples of statements about the climate change impacts on Alaska Natives and the benefits of mitigation. 2007.  
<https://www.narf.org/nill/triballaw/climate/>

**[Tribe]**  
**RESOLUTION**  
**TO ESTABLISH A CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION INITIATIVE**

**WHEREAS**, the [Tribe] is a federally recognized tribe, recognized by the United States Government and all of its Governing bodies and agencies; and

**WHEREAS**, the [Climate Change Adaptation Initiative] will be included in the [Code under which the initiative will be housed]; and

**WHEREAS**, there is overwhelming scientific evidence of climate change driven in part by the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, the effects of which may significantly affect the [Tribe] through [local climate change impacts], and other associated effects on the local environment, natural resources, and infrastructure on which the [Tribe] has traditionally relied; and

**WHEREAS**, inaction in the present may yield negative social, environmental, cultural, and economic consequences in the near future; and

**WHEREAS**, [Department] will oversee and coordinate the [Climate Change Adaptation Initiative]; and

**WHEREAS**, [Department] will [implement proposed actions]; and

**WHEREAS**, the [Department] will seek funding to support the [Climate Change Adaptation Initiative]; and

**WHEREAS**, the [Climate Change Adaptation Initiative] will create a more resilient community, able to cope with the impacts of climate change on the tribe's social, environmental, cultural, and economic welfare; and

**WHEREAS**, the [Climate Change Adaptation Initiative] will remain in effect indefinitely because the [Tribe] will need to continuously adapt to climate change and its impacts;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the [TRIBAL COUNCIL] supports the [Tribe's] [Climate Change Adaptation Initiative]:

To undertake efforts to determine the potential local effects of climate change on the [Tribe]; and

To develop policies and strategies for addressing the potential effects of climate change on the [Tribe], including [policies and strategies]; and

To communicate and coordinate with other Indigenous Peoples and government entities and jurisdictions to address potential climate change impacts; and

To communicate to and with the local community about issues and concerns regarding the potential local impacts of climate change; and

**THE [TRIBAL COUNCIL] FURTHER RESOLVES** for the [Department] to report to the Council every quarter on the [Climate Change Adaptation Initiative's] advancements.

By the authority of these individuals as representatives and leaders of the [Tribe], this resolution is made [date].

