



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #ECWS-23-002

TITLE: Calling for Protection of Traditional Cultural Properties—Pushpum (Juniper Point, Washington)

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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American 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 the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI-member tribal governments claim inherent sovereign authority to protect Traditional Cultural Properties that have religious and ceremonial significance in their ancestral food-gathering and subsistence grounds; and

WHEREAS, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (“Yakama Nation”), an NCAI-member, opposes the development of proposed pump storage at Juniper Point, Washington—also known as *Pushpum*—located in the Yakama Treaty-territory, on the basis of permanent and irreparable destruction of Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) that hold sacred religious and ceremonial importance to the Yakama Nation; and

WHEREAS, in July 2022, the leadership of 17 Treaty-tribal governments issued a public letter in support of the Yakama Nation and urged the Washington State Governor to deny permits for proposed pumped storage development that would destroy sacred food-gathering and ceremonial sites at *Pushpum*; and

WHEREAS, environmental analysis of proposed development at *Pushpum* under the Washington State Environmental Protection Act concurs that construction and operation of the proposed pump storage project indicates significant and unavoidable adverse impacts on tribal and cultural resources.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI supports and stands with the Yakama Nation’s opposition to the proposed pump storage development at *Pushpum* and the permitting of development that threatens to destroy Traditional Cultural Properties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI joins other Tribal Nations facing the loss of TCPs for national energy development that is permitted by state and federal entities; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NCAI calls on the Washington State Governor to honor the environmental conclusions from the state's own Department of Ecology by denying permits for the proposed pump storage project on sacred land.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2023 Executive Council Winter Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held February 20-23, 2023, in Washington, DC, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Stephen Roe Lewis, Recording Secretary