



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #DEN-18-047

### TITLE: Opposing Offshore Drilling

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**NCAI HEADQUARTERS**  
1516 P Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.466.7767  
202.466.7797 fax  
www.ncai.org

**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, 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**, anadromous fish, upon which the Northwest Member Tribes depend, spend significant time in offshore ocean areas of the Pacific Ocean from Oregon to Alaska and the ocean conditions these fish experience affect their survival; and

**WHEREAS**, the Bureau of Offshore Energy Management, pursuant to Executive Order 13795 and Secretarial Order 3350, has released a draft five-year plan to open the Pacific continental shelf and other coastal areas to lease sales for offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling, which includes areas previously protected from exploitation; and

**WHEREAS**, offshore drilling projects increase risks of catastrophic spills of crude oil; and

**WHEREAS**, catastrophic spills of crude oil have been shown by multiple scientific studies to be harmful to aquatic species including salmon; and

**WHEREAS**, offshore drilling operations produce other types of pollution that harm aquatic life, including drilling muds, brine wastes, deck runoff water, and flowline and pipeline leaks; and

**WHEREAS**, offshore drilling operations would negatively affect tribal and coastal economies, public health, and marine life and exacerbate current stress related to anaerobic zones emerging in the ocean; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI opposes and has opposed projects that substantially degrade treaty fishery resources and the ecosystems upon which those resources depend; and

**WHEREAS**, offshore drilling projects in the Pacific Northwest coastal regions would pose significant and irreversible risks to tribal fishery resources, protected under treaties with the United States.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) hereby opposes any proposal to open the Pacific Northwest oceans to offshore drilling or lease sales and calls upon the federal government to fulfill its trust obligation to protect treaty and aboriginal resources by continuing the moratorium on offshore drilling in these waters and exempting the region from proposed offshore drilling lease sales; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI stands with the governors of Oregon, Washington, and California and a growing bipartisan list of members of Congress who oppose the proposal, citing diverse concerns including lasting harm, past devastation, and scientific evidence against offshore drilling; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI calls upon every federal agency involved with actions potentially impacting its member tribes' treaty and aboriginal resources or rights to fulfill its trust obligation to consult directly and individually with each tribe, as is directed by Presidential Executive Order 13175; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

### CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2018 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency in Denver, Colorado October 21-26, 2018, with a quorum present.

  
Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:

  
Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary