



COLORADO RIVER INDIAN TRIBES

Colorado River Indian Reservation

26600 MOHAVE ROAD
PARKER, ARIZONA 85344
TELEPHONE (928) 669-1220
FAX (928) 669-1216

November 2, 2015

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress
1511 Longworth House Office
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Grijalva:

On behalf of the Colorado River Indian Tribe, I write in support of your proposed legislation to designate the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument in the State of Arizona.

The Colorado River Indian Tribes is a federally recognized Indian tribe comprised of members of Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi and Navajo descent. The Aha Macav, or Mohave people, have called the deserts, mountains, and waters of Arizona, Nevada and California that surround the current reservation lands their home since time immemorial and the Chemehuevi have lived nomadically on the land as well.

As proposed, your legislation would preserve, and if necessary, restore the native, cultural, sacred lands found in the Greater Grand Canyon ecosystem. Protecting the above ground streams and tributaries that feed the main-stem Colorado River is particularly vital to our people. CRIT has worked tirelessly to protect our water resources, and have developed a vibrant on-reservation economy that is intimately tied to the continued availability of clean river water. The creation of the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage Monument will help preserve this asset for generations to come.

The proposed national monument will also help protect CRIT sacred sites, cultural resources, and our historic and prehistoric artifacts. For years, poorly sited development on Federal lands has caused friction between the tribe, federal agencies and private developers, as the Bureau of Land

Management has embraced a policy of curating historic and prehistoric artifacts that are uncovered during development.

We have repeatedly requested that any uncovered artifacts be reburied in-situ rather than curated, and ask that you take notice of the National Congress of American Indian's recent passage of Resolution SD-15-025, in support of this position. It is my hope you will commit to work with the Colorado River Indian Tribes and other tribes to ensure a policy of reburial, rather than curation is applied to all artifacts uncovered in the proposed National Monument. Furthermore, I hope you will work with us to ensure this policy is implemented across the board so all artifacts uncovered on federal lands can be handled in a culturally appropriate way.

Finally, I want to thank you for your long time support of the Colorado River Indian Tribe. Your continued support means a great deal to me and our community, and this legislation once again demonstrates that you understand the needs and priorities of Arizona's first nations. We stand ready to support your effort to create the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument through legislation or any other means. Thank you again for your efforts, and I look forward to working with you to protect this sacred landscape.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Patch". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke.

Dennis Patch
Chairman, Colorado River Indian Tribes

RESOLUTION
COLORADO RIVER TRIBAL COUNCIL

A Resolution in Support of the Proposed Bill to Designate the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument in the State of Arizona

Be it resolved by the Tribal Council of the Colorado River Indian Tribes, in *special* meeting assembled

on October 8, 2015

WHEREAS, the Colorado River Indian Tribes (hereinafter "CRIT" or "Tribe") is a federally recognized Indian Tribe, duly organized with a tribal governing body known as the Tribal Council according to the provisions contained in the Indian Reorganization Act of June 18, 1934; and

WHEREAS, Article VI, Section 1, (r), of the Constitution of the Colorado River Indian Tribes authorizes the Tribal Council to preserve and encourage the arts, crafts, culture and traditions of the Tribe; and

WHEREAS, CRIT is a federally recognized Indian Tribe consisting of members of Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi, and Navajo descent; and

WHEREAS, the Aha Macav or Mohave, people of Yuman descent and Patayan Pre-Historic Man of Tribe have called the deserts, mountains, and waters of Arizona, Nevada, and California that surround the current reservation lands their home since time immemorial and the Chemehuevi of the Tribe lived nomadically upon the land; and

WHEREAS, water, emanating from the Colorado River Basin, is the physical, cultural, and economic lifeblood of the peoples comprising the Tribes and of the Colorado River Indian Reservation (the "Reservation"); and

WHEREAS, as a downstream beneficiary of 719,248 acre-feet annually of adjudicated water right the Tribes have a deep-rooted interest in the protection of the entire Colorado River Basin water in order to safeguard the health, safety, welfare, and environment of the Tribes' members and Reservation; and

The foregoing resolution was on October 8, 2015 duly approved by a vote of 7 for, 0 against and 0 abstaining, by the Tribal Council of the Colorado River Indian Tribes, pursuant to authority vested in it by Sections 1.f., Article VI of the Constitution and By laws of the Tribes, ratified by the Tribes on March 1, 1975 and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on May 29, 1975, pursuant to Section 16 of the Act of June 18, 1934, (46 Stat. 984). This resolution is effective as of the date of its adoption.

COLORADO RIVER TRIBAL COUNCIL

By

[Signature]
Chairman
[Signature]
Secretary

RESOLUTION NO. R- 356-15

OCTOBER 8, 2015

PAGE 2

WHEREAS, CRIT has worked tirelessly to preserve protect both its waters, cultural resources, and sacred sites; and

WHEREAS, United States Representative Raul Grijalva is introducing a bill to designate the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument in the State of Arizona; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the national monument are to preserve and, if necessary, restore the native, cultural, sacred lands and key tribal resources, nationally significant biological, ecological, including wildlife connectivity, cultural, historical, recreational, geological, hydrological, education, scenic and scientific values found in the Greater Grand Canyon ecosystem and watershed, including above-ground tributaries, springs and interconnected groundwater that contributes significantly to the Colorado River, and to secure now and for future generations the opportunity to experience and enjoy the diverse tribal resources, landscape, wildlife, water flows and recreational use of the lands included in the national monument.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tribal Council of the Colorado River Indian Tribes to support the introduction and enactment of the bill to designate the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage Monument in the State of Arizona; and

BE IT FURTHER AND FINALLY RESOLVED that the Tribal Council Chairman and Secretary, or their designated representatives, are hereby authorized and directed to execute any and all documents necessary to implement this Resolution.



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SD-15-025

TITLE: Urging the Department of the Interior to Support Policy in Favor of In-Situ Reburial of Artifacts

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Liana Onnen
Prarie Band of Potawatomi Nation

SOUTHWEST

Joe Garcia
Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo

WESTERN

Bruce Ignacio
Ute Indian Tribe

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jacqueline Pata
Tingit

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, the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) is a federally-recognized Indian Tribe consisting of members of Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi, and Navajo descent; and

WHEREAS, the Aha Macav or Mohave, people of Yuman descent and Patayan Pre-Historic Man of CRIT have called the deserts, mountains, and waters of Arizona, Nevada, and California that surround the current reservation lands their home since time immemorial and the Chemehuevi of CRIT lived nomadically upon the land; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Interior (DOI) has prioritized the development of renewable energy projects, many of which are sited on federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM); and

WHEREAS, the NCAI previously adopted Resolution #LNK-12-036, opposing DOI's policy of fast-tracking solar energy projects within the ancestral territory homelands of CRIT, as well as other Yuman Tribes; and

WHEREAS, despite warnings by CRIT and other tribes, utility-scale renewable energy projects have been sited and constructed in areas known to contain sensitive cultural and tribal resources such as sacred trails and landscapes, artifacts such as manos and metates, and desert plants and animals which are intertwined with our traditional cultural and spiritual beliefs and values; and

WHEREAS, in connection with the Genesis Solar Energy Project located outside of Blythe, California, approximately 3,000 sacred objects were unearthed and removed from the project site, including manos, metates, and pendants, many of which were carelessly destroyed or damaged by giant earthmoving equipment; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of DOI to require collection and curation of artifacts for data recovery purposes, including artifacts discovered during construction of utility-scale renewable energy projects; and

WHEREAS, removal of artifacts from the ground is contrary to Mohave cultural and religious practices, and the removal of artifacts erases the tribal footprint on the land, therefore causing severe cultural and spiritual harm to Indian people; and

WHEREAS, DOI's curation policy is insensitive to the history of Indian people in the United States because it promotes the mentality and practice of putting Native American cultures on display; and

WHEREAS, DOI's rigid application of regulations to artifacts unearthed during construction of utility-scale renewable energy projects is misguided due to the rigidity of NEPA federal law because it contends that every artifact should be preserved in perpetuity at museum and research facilities, an infeasible contention; and

WHEREAS, CRIT has repeatedly attempted to engage DOI to allow reburial of all unearthed artifacts near the location where they were disturbed, discovered or unearthed, and has faced resistance on the part of the federal government.

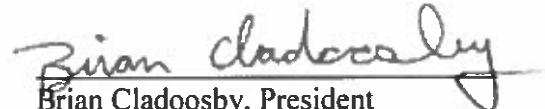
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls upon the Department of Interior to conduct meaningful consultation with tribes affected by DOI unearthing artifacts from energy development on tribal lands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DOI must allow affected Indian tribes to rebury unearthed artifacts near the location where they were disturbed, discovered or unearthed during the construction of renewable energy projects and other developments on public lands; 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 2015 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Resort, San Diego, CA, October 18-23, 2015, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary