



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #MKE-17-066

**TITLE: Support for the Ramapough Lenape Nation to Protect Lands, Waters,
Burial Grounds and Sacred Places**

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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 Ramapough Lenape Nation is a sovereign entity that pre-dates the United States, recognized as such by the State of New Jersey, with rights to self-government, culture, religion, and a clean and healthy land, water, and environment; and

WHEREAS, the Ramapough Lenape Nation provides territory by the Ramapo River for religious ceremonies and gatherings of Ramapough and other indigenous nations; and

WHEREAS, indigenous religious ceremonies and gatherings are necessary for a healthy relationship of humans to the land, water, and air; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Mahwah, NJ seeks to deny the right of the Ramapough and other indigenous people to pray and conduct ceremonies by the Ramapo River on Ramapough private land; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Mahwah, NJ may use the current conflict as an opportunity to take the private land of the Ramapough Lenape Nation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) supports the Ramapough Lenape Nation's legal efforts to protect land, water, cultural and religious rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NCAI calls upon the Town of Mahwah and State of New Jersey to explicitly renounce and disavow any attempt to force Ramapough to sell land or to take Ramapough ceremonial and private land as a result of current legal proceedings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in carrying out this resolution we remain in peace and prayerful and Indian Country's first concern is for the safety of the protectors and neighbors, and any act of violence, subversion, espionage, planting evidence, false charges or corruption is unwelcome; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI supports the Ramapough Nation's, indigenous people's and ally's inherent right to practice freedom of speech, religion and assembly and opposes the criminalization of gathering to pray at the Split Rock Sweetwater site; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NCAI calls upon the States of New Jersey and New York to protect the land, water and environmental health of traditional Ramapough villages such as Ringwood and Mahwah, NJ and Hillburn, NY and work with the Ramapough Lenape Nation, government-to-government, for the benefit of all people, animals, and life; 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 2017 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, WI, Oct 15, 2017 - Oct 20, 2017, with a quorum present.



Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary