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The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #LV-24-XXX

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Title: Call for Congressional Action: Establish Annual Funding for Tribal Emergency Management

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, Tribal Nations face a significant gap in meeting essential homeland security and emergency management capabilities due to a lack of dedicated funding, hindering their ability to respond effectively to disasters. Unlike state and local governments, which have received federal funding for over 50 years to develop and sustain such capabilities, Tribal Nations are left with insufficient staff and inadequate resources to manage preparedness programs, respond to emergent events, and to navigate the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal processes. Most federal government emergency management funding is passed through from states to Tribes, if any, which doesn't align with the government-to-government relationship and sovereign status of Tribal Nations.

WHEREAS, the federal government has a trust and treaty responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of Tribal Nations. The December 2023 Executive Order on Reforming Federal Funding and Support for Tribal Nations reinforces the federal government's commitment to uphold these responsibilities by making federal funding more accessible, flexible, and equitable for Tribal Nations, empowering them to address unique community resiliency needs, including emergency management and disaster preparedness; and



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WHEREAS, adequate and sustained funding for Tribal Emergency Management would directly fulfill the goals set out in President Biden’s 2023 Executive Order 14112, which emphasizes reducing bureaucratic barriers, enhancing Tribal sovereignty, and giving Tribal Nations greater autonomy in how federal funds are utilized. This funding would enable Tribes to better protect their communities from natural and human-made disasters by meeting minimum federal standards while ensuring the safety of Native American citizens; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls for the establishment of annual appropriations of government funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Emergency Management to be a conduit for providing emergency management funds to all federally recognized Tribes for Tribal Emergency Management Programs. This program should allocate sufficient resources to meet the minimum standards mandated by the Homeland Security Act and the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. The suggested funding, estimated at \$360,000 annually per Tribal nation, aims to support federal standards while ensuring the safety of Native American communities. This investment is a crucial step in fulfilling the federal government’s trust responsibilities to Tribal Nations and protecting the lives and livelihoods of Native Americans and advancing the sovereignty of Tribal governments in managing their emergency preparedness and response.

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 2024 Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians, held October 27-November 1, 2024, in Las Vegas, NV with a quorum present.

Mark Macarro, President

ATTEST:



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Nickolaus Lewis, Recording Secretary