



## **2019 Annual Convention Suquamish, Washington**

### **RESOLUTION #19 - 58**

#### **“SUPPORT OF THE 'NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE' AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE IN THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST, ALASKA ROADLESS RULEMAKING PROCESS”**

#### **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest 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 rights secured under Indian Treaties, Executive Orders, and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and constitution of the United States and several states, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise to promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are representatives of and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of the ATNI; and

**WHEREAS**, tribes of Alaska's southeast region are federally recognized Indian Tribes under federal law and these Tribes' traditional territory includes lands within and around the Tongass National Forest; and

**WHEREAS**, protection of the inherent right to harvest and use tribal traditional and customary foods requires careful cultural stewardship and protection of tribal traditional environmental and natural resources; and

**WHEREAS**, indigenous peoples' longstanding care of the ancestral lands, now classified as "inventoried roadless areas" (IRA) and, within the Tongass National Forest, has been in place for millennia and these lands not only provide indigenous people with food, they essentially define who we are and where we come from; and

**WHEREAS**, inventoried roadless areas protect healthy watersheds which provide cold, clean water that has sustained Tribal ways of life since time immemorial and, inventoried roadless areas contain many sacred sites integral to Tribal spiritual, religious, and traditional practices; and

**WHEREAS**, inventoried roadless areas conserve natural diversity and help ensure the continued protection of indigenous fish and wildlife habitat as it relates to our spiritual, social, nutritional, and ecological values; and

**WHEREAS**, given Southeast Alaska's cool wet weather, the amount of stored carbon in our intact old-growth forest and soils, the Tongass National Forest represents one of the highest carbon stores in the world and the conservation of intact inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass is essential for slowing down climate change throughout the world; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the State of Alaska's own economic experts, Tongass timber is uncompetitive because of permanent and fundamental changes in global timber markets, high labor costs, distance from markets, and less expensive substitutes and the Tongass timber industry represents less than one percent of today's jobs and earnings in Southeast Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, at hearings held across Southeast Alaska in 2000 on the proposed roadless rule, nearly 60 percent of the Southeast Alaskans who spoke at the hearings supported including the Tongass National Forest in the final roadless rule, and has grown to upward of 80 percent to date; and

**WHEREAS**, any rule that weakens or eliminates Roadless Rule protections within Tribal traditional territory of the Tongass National Forest will substantially affect Southeast Tribes' inherent Tribal rights to traditional and customary uses of the land; now

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Tribes enjoying customary and traditional uses of the Tongass National Forest strongly support lasting protection for inventoried roadless areas within the Tongass National Forest as provided in the 2001 Roadless Rule; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that ATNI requests the Secretary of Agriculture to select the 'no-action alternative' as the preferred alternative in the Tongass National Forest, Alaska - Roadless Rulemaking process.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2019 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort, Suquamish, Washington, on October 7-10, 2019, with a quorum present.



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Leonard Forsman, President



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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary