



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SAC-21-017

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TITLE: The Permanent Protection and Preservation of Nantucket Sound as a Traditional Cultural Property and a Site of Historical and Cultural Significance to Tribal Nations

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, American Indians hold certain sites sacred as a result of the site's traditional and cultural religious significance to Tribal Nations and their citizens; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI has, since its formation, remained steadfast in opposition to harmful industrial development on sacred sites, such as Bears Ears, the Mojave Desert region, and the Badger-Two Medicine area; and

WHEREAS, Members of Congress have recognized that sacred sites and burial grounds cannot be equated with other lands that can be restored, and that sacred sites that have been damaged can never be made whole again; and

WHEREAS, Nantucket Sound in the state of Massachusetts is the present-day home and sacred ancestral lands of the Mashpee Wampanoag, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and other Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, Nantucket Sound is the first ocean-based traditional cultural property (TCP) recognized by the Department of the Interior's Keeper of the National Register as being eligible for designation as TCP meeting historic and archaeological property that is a source of crucial information relating to American Indian exploration and settlements as well as being inseparably associated with the cultural beliefs, identity, and spirituality of Tribal Nations since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Interior's Keeper of the National Register has determined the Nantucket Sound reference number: 65009992 Eligible and pending by Federal Determinations Of Eligibility on 11/18/2009 under the District category; and

WHEREAS, the Keeper of the National Register recognized that Nantucket Sound and the surrounding land areas are a rich and unique tapestry of American prehistory, history, and culture, and the continued vitality of Wampanoag traditional religious and cultural practices and their integral relation to Nantucket Sound add a rare additional dimension of significance; and

WHEREAS, the Keeper of the National Register determined that Nantucket Sound is a traditional cultural property that is a source of crucial information about Native American exploration and settlement of Cape Cod and the Islands, and is an integral, contributing feature of a larger, culturally significant landscape treasured by the Wampanoag Tribe and inseparably associated with the Tribes' historical cultural beliefs; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation recognizes Nantucket Sound as nationally significant for its multiple historic values and as being unique in context, setting, and identity as an area of prime national, regional and local importance because of its substantial economic, recreational, social, cultural, and traditional cultural benefits and attributes; and

WHEREAS, if left unprotected, Nantucket Sound and its waters would continue to be vulnerable to industrial development as well as environmental and climate change impacts that lead to habitat degradation, coastal erosion, diminished water quality, and depletion of fish stocks causing irreversible damage to this place of cultural, natural, and historical significance of the Tribal Nations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) supports legislative and administrative efforts by the United States to protect Nantucket Sound in perpetuity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NCAI supports the protection of all places of cultural, natural, and historical significance of the Tribal Nations; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution embodies and 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 2021 Annual Conference of the National Congress of American Indians, held October 11-14, 2021, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Aaron A. Payment, Recording Secretary