



National Congress of American Indians | 1516 P St NW, Washington, DC 20005 | (202) 466-7767 | www.ncai.org

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The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #NC-24-004

TITLE: Enacting Legislation to Authorize USDA to Convey Lands to Tribal Nations such as the Small Tribal Forest Restoration Act of 2024

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, NCAI Resolution [#PDX-11-004](#) called upon Congress to fulfill its federal trust responsibility to Indian Country during the 2012/2014 Farm Bill negotiations; and

WHEREAS, NCAI Resolution [#MKE-17-013](#) charged NCAI with identifying Indian Country's priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill negotiations; and

WHEREAS, NCAI Resolution [#PDX-20-024](#) renewed NCAI's commitment to advancing the priorities of the Native Farm Bill Coalition in future Farm Bills; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) owns and manages many lands which were once part of the traditional homelands of Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, the USDA's Forest Service has worked closely with Tribal Nations throughout the country on co-management, increasing access to traditional homelands for harvesting and other activities, and much more; and



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WHEREAS, the USDA’s Forest Service has expressed a desire to work closer with Tribal Nations but is often hampered by their lack of legal authority; and

WHEREAS, the USDA’s Forest Service is authorized to convey lands to State and Local governments through the Small Tracts Act of 1984 (Pub.L 97-465) and other authorities; and

WHEREAS, these authorities do not allow the USDA’s Forest Service to convey lands to Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, the 2024 Farm Bill negotiation, with the potential to extend in 2025, presents an important opportunity to promote parity for Tribal Nations by authorizing the USDA’s Forest Service to convey land to Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, the Small Tribal Forest Restoration Act of 2024 seeks to amend the Small Tracts Act of 1984 to authorize the USDA’s Forest Service to convey up to 500 acres to be held in trust for Indian Tribes; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI urges the U.S. Congress, including the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, to enact legislation authorizing USDA to convey land to Tribal Nations, such as the Small Tribal Forest Restoration Act of 2024; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI urges the President’s Administration to actively support the development and enactment of provisions in the 2024/2025 Farm Bill that authorize the USDA’s Forest Service to convey lands to Tribal Nations; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.



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CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted unanimously by the Executive Committee on Friday, June 14, 2024, following recommendations of adoption by the relevant Committees and referral from the General Assembly at the 2024 Mid Year Convention of the National Congress of American Indians, held June 1-6, 2024, in Cherokee, NC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Macarro", written over a horizontal line.

Mark Macarro, President

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nickolaus Lewis", written over a horizontal line.

Nickolaus Lewis, Recording Secretary