



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

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SEA-25-010

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TITLE: Establishing Support for recognizing the Rights of *Manoomin/Psín*; a sacred plant that is central to Indigenous cultures in the Great Lakes region

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 #ANC-22-008, duly adopted at the 2022 Mid Year Convention in Anchorage, Alaska, establishes a policy for the National Congress of American Indians to support the rights of nature legal framework promoted by various Tribal Nations in the United States; and

WHEREAS, as an example, wild rice, known as *Manoomin* in Anishinaabemowin and *Psín* in Dakota, holds profound cultural significance for Native peoples in the Midwest region and is essential to biodiversity and ecosystems health; and

WHEREAS, wild rice holds significant spiritual importance for American Indian communities, as it is not only a staple food but also an aspect of our inherent relationship to the Earth, rooted in Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and fundamental to our identity and ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, Anishinaabeg Nations' treaties with the United States protect the inherent right and responsibility of the Anishinaabeg to harvest wild rice; and



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WHEREAS, protecting wild rice is not just an environmental concern, but a matter of honoring treaties, nourishing indigenous bodies and culture, and ensuring that future generations can continue to practice their traditional ways of life; and

WHEREAS, wild rice faces significant threats from climate change, invasive species, pollution, and other human activities, all of which collectively jeopardize its existence; and

WHEREAS, the wild rice plant is especially sensitive to water quality, and can be compromised by various activities, such as mining, as elements such as water flow and temperature are essential for wild rice growth, and preserving the integrity of the wetlands home to wild rice beds is vital to maintaining biodiversity and the overall health of aquatic environments; and

WHEREAS, wild rice is a key indicator of freshwater health, and wild rice lakes are vital ecosystems that support diverse wildlife and plant species; and

WHEREAS, protecting wild rice directly correlates to maintaining water quality and habitat integrity, as wild rice thrives in clean, nutrient-balanced waters; and

WHEREAS, waters home to natural wild rice beds sustain an intricate web of life and also support local communities that depend on healthy ecosystems, and safeguarding wild rice ensures the resilience of freshwater systems.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) supports recognizing the inherent rights of *Manoomin/Psín* (wild rice) to exist and thrive under the same legal framework as the rights of nature recognized in NCAI Resolution #ANC-22-008.

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 by the General Assembly at the 2025 Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians, held November 16-21 at the Seattle Convention Center in Seattle, Washington, with a quorum present.

Mark Macarro, President

ATTEST:

Christie Modlin, Recording Secretary