



2014 Winter Convention Ferndale, WA

RESOLUTION #14 - 17

“URGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF PCBs IN ANY AMOUNT IN NEW PRODUCTS”

PREAMBLE

We the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) 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 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, promotion of the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunities of native people and preservation of their cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of the ATNI; and

WHEREAS, since time immemorial, we the first people of the Pacific Northwest, have cared for and sustained our way of life, religion and culture beginning with the pure water that we hold sacred, and are obligated to take action now to care for the water for the next seven generations; and

WHEREAS, some Pacific Northwest waters now contain unsafe levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other toxics, as documented in many studies; multiple advisories have already been issued warning against eating PCB-contaminated fish; and

WHEREAS, it is also well-documented that tribal people eat significantly more fish and shellfish than the “average” non-Indian population and are thus subject to disproportionately higher risks simply from exercising our rights and practicing our religion and culture; and

WHEREAS, PCBs bio-accumulate; they do not break down or dissipate; no amount is safe; new products containing PCBs and additional discharges only add to and increase the existing burden from already-pervasive PCBs in the environment; and

WHEREAS, EPA plans to maintain its policy allowing up to 50 parts per million (ppm) of PCBs in new products, and is not proposing to revise this policy in its current rulemaking; and

WHEREAS, EPA’s current rules are more than thirty years old, did not take into consideration the risks to tribal people, other fish consumers, or the environment, and are based almost entirely on economic considerations, and it is time for EPA to update its PCB rules to better protect all the people who rely on clean water and healthy fish; and

WHEREAS, continuing to authorize the use of PCBs and further contamination of our fish and our water violates tribal treaty rights, fails to fulfill the federal government’s trust responsibility to protect tribal trust assets, and violates EPA’s Environmental Justice Policy; and

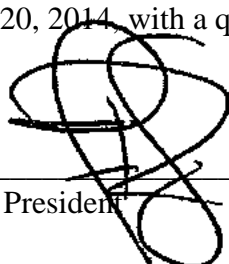
WHEREAS, tribes and states in the region have established (or are in the process of establishing) water quality standards using more accurate tribal fish consumption rates; meeting these standards will be difficult or impossible if PCBs are still allowed in some products; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI opposes the EPA’s continuing policy allowing up to 50 ppm of PCBs in new sources; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that EPA should revise its rules so that the amount of PCBs authorized for commercial use is zero (0), and should seize every opportunity to reduce the use and production of toxics, before they are released into the environment.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2014 Winter Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the Silver Reef Hotel Casino Spa, Ferndale, WA on February 17-20, 2014, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary