

TESTIMONY

Of

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Before

**The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
June 9, 2011**

**Setting the Standards: The Domestic Policy
Implications of the United Nations Declaration on
The Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Introduction

Aanii. Pipigwa ododem. Naakwegeshik n'dizhnikaz. Waganakising n'doonjibaa. (Hello. Sparrow Hawk is my clan. Noon Day in my name. I'm from the place of the Crooked Tree.) I live near Harbor Springs, Michigan in the Odawa homeland of Waganakising. I want to acknowledge the Elders across Indian Country who have maintained our traditional ways and shared with us the knowledge, strength and guidance to help us to live in a good way.

Thank you for the invitation to give testimony today before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Over the past 20 years I've been privileged to serve my tribe, the Waganakising Odawak (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians of Michigan), in both elected and appointed office. After leaving the office of Tribal Chairman in 2009, I became the Executive Director of the United Tribes of Michigan, a position in which I still serve. I also serve as the co-chair of the National Congress of American Indians' Federal Recognition Task Force. In this capacity on Wednesday, November 4, 2009, I presented the testimony on behalf of the National Congress of American Indians at an oversight hearing on the federal recognition process before this committee.

During my tenure as a Tribal Chairman, I attended several State Department meetings with tribal leaders regarding the negotiation for the proposed United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Declaration). I considered this work to be of the highest importance and was disappointed when the United States did not vote in the affirmative when the final declaration was considered by the United Nations in September 2007. Many tribal citizens and leaders throughout Indian Country made repeated and consistent efforts to encourage the United States to reconsider this position and to endorse the Declaration. Meanwhile, the three other Nation States who voted no, one at a time, changed their positions over the intervening years. And then, in December 2010, we were excited to hear President Obama indicate that after careful consideration the position of the United States was changed.

The lengthy and difficult process by which this Declaration was negotiated and approved by the Nation States of the world gives indication of the ongoing complexity of Indigenous Peoples' positions within diverse governing systems of the world nations. The Indigenous Peoples' place in the unfolding history of human development is one of significant struggle against oppression, exploitation, genocide, and marginalization.

While there are myriad ramifications for all parties concerned in the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration, in this testimony I will be mainly focused on the issues of recognition of Indigenous Peoples and the collective challenge facing humankind in dealing with our changing climate.

Federal Recognition

The Declaration acknowledges indigenous peoples and outlines standards which the world community of Nation States believes that the member nations should uphold in their relationships with Indigenous Peoples. In the United States Constitution North America's indigenous peoples are referred to as Indian Tribes whose existence predates that of the United States itself. These Indian Tribes are nations with inherent sovereignty with our own laws and customs. By recognizing or acknowledging a tribal nation the US government is not creating a nation or sovereign entity. The US government is merely recognizing an already existing tribal nation. No one can give sovereignty to a nation. A nation or entity either is sovereign or it is not.

It is the responsibility of each sovereign to negotiate the acceptance of its sovereignty by the other sovereigns with whom it interacts. Tribal nations, like all the world's nations, must constantly negotiate the acceptance of their sovereignty with each other and with other national governments in a continually changing world.

Indigenous Peoples have banded together with each other in support of this negotiation for the acceptance of their sovereignty. A couple of examples are the United League of Indigenous Nations Treaty (ULIN) and the World Parliament of Indigenous Peoples, although there are many other organizational efforts.

The ULIN Treaty has a growing number of Indigenous Peoples as signers, currently numbering in excess of 80. These signatories are so far to date from Indigenous Peoples and Nations who are located within the Nation States of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. The opening principles within the treaty include that *"The Creator has made us part of and inseparable from the natural world around us..."* and that the *"Political, social, cultural and economic relations between our Indigenous Nations have existed since time immemorial and our right to continue such relationships are inseparable from our inherent Indigenous rights of nationhood. Indigenous Peoples have the right of self-determination and, by*

virtue of that right, our Peoples freely determine our political status and freely pursue our social, cultural and economic development.” (copy of treaty attached)

Booshakti Kendra (Mother Earth Center) near Tumkur, India, was the location for the First Roundtable discussing the creation of the World Parliament of Indigenous Peoples on the 7th through the 10th of January 2011. Thirty-nine representatives of Indigenous Peoples from around the world held three days of discussions and ceremonies, issuing a statement that said, in part,

“The unrelenting assault on the cultures, histories and dignity of the Indigenous Peoples and the living Universe must be understood and responded to creatively by Indigenous Peoples themselves. The First Round Table of the World Parliament of Indigenous Peoples asserts that while we recognize our cultural differences, we simultaneously and synergistically gather together our common cultural ethics and ancestral understandings toward the fulfilment of our self-assertion, self-actualization, self-determination, sovereignty and ultimately, our transformation. These at once ancient and contemporary strengths will enable us to move within the formation of nation-states within which we find ourselves, transforming them in ways that embody Indigenous ethics of respect, relationship and reciprocity for Indigenous communities, along with all other peoples, particularly marginalised and/or excluded communities. ” (copy of full statement attached)

In the United States, the US Supreme Court has grappled with the issues relating to the Indian Tribes and has made many rulings that govern the relationship of the US government and its political subdivisions with the Indian Tribal Nations. The Constitution and court rulings however do not direct the internal sovereignty and affairs of the Tribal Nations or limit that sovereignty. These rulings do, however, make the exercise of sovereignty by a Tribal Nation more difficult by placing limits within US law on federal, state and local governments in dealing with tribal issues.

There are 565 federally recognized Indian Tribal Nations in the US. There are many unrecognized sovereign Tribal Nations not counted in this number who are seeking acknowledgement of federal/tribal relations. The manner in which the United States has been “negotiating” its acceptance of these Tribal Nations has been a process that is cumbersome, expensive, demeaning, excessively lengthy, and filled with contradictions. The process

takes so long that this alone creates an injustice not in keeping with the Declaration. The Declaration acknowledges that whether federally recognized or not, the US and all world nations have responsibilities, standards for action, and ethical duties to respect Indigenous Peoples rights and existence.

The US recognition process assumes that recognition is a one-way arrangement when actually it is an acknowledgment of a two-way relationship. Both parties have rights, responsibilities and duties in the maintenance of this relationship. The Declaration outlines parameters for this relationship that were previously not commonly utilized. Implicit within the Declaration is the expectation that all Indigenous Peoples can expect and demand that their inherent rights are respected in their relations with Nation States.

Climate Change

The traditional knowledge held by the indigenous peoples of the world, and within the United States, is a vast reservoir of teachings and lore that contains within it much that is needed as we collectively face an uncertain future, filled with a rapidly changing climate, rising sea levels, and cataclysmic natural disasters. This uncertainty is having, and will continue to have, significant effects within individuals, families, communities, nations and across the entire world.

Indigenous Peoples from around the world have been preparing for dealing with these changes. In 2008, in Palenque, Mexico, the Convening of Indigenous Peoples for the Healing of Mother Earth was held with nearly 150 representatives from all across North America. Using our traditional knowledge and teachings a document was drafted outlining the imbalance that Indigenous People feel in the Earth today and issuing a warning of the dire consequences humankind is facing because of this imbalance (*copy attached*).

In 2009, at Prior Lake, Minnesota, the Native Peoples Native Homelands Climate Change Workshop II was held. The result was the Mystic Lake Declaration the intent of which was to inform the discussions at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit. In this Declaration Native Peoples stated

“We hereby declare, affirm, and assert our inalienable rights as well as responsibilities as members of sovereign Native Nations. In doing so, we

expect to be active participants with full representation in United States and international legally binding treaty agreements regarding climate, energy, biodiversity, food sovereignty, water and sustainable development policies affecting our peoples and our respective Homelands on Turtle Island (North America) and Pacific Islands.

We are of the Earth. The Earth is the source of life to be protected, not merely a resource to be exploited. Our ancestors' remains lie within her. Water is her lifeblood. We are dependent upon her for our shelter and our sustenance. Our lifeways are the original "green economies." We have our place and our responsibilities within Creation's sacred order. We feel the sustaining joy as things occur in harmony. We feel the pain of disharmony when we witness the dishonor of the natural order of Creation and the degradation of Mother Earth and her companion Moon." (see attached copy)

The North American tribal nations who reside within the territory of the United States are among the first in the US to directly feel the impacts of the changing climate just as around the world, indigenous peoples are today and will continue to be the earliest and most severely impacted. In the arctic whole seaside native villages are threatened as erosion from rising waters and melting permafrost combine in a relentless process that is causing them to be destroyed. The Indian Tribal Nations along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico have suffered loss of land, resources, heritage sites, and have suffered severe economic hardship due to storm erosion and rising ocean levels.

Across the whole United States tribal nations' physical, social, emotional and spiritual environments are under attack by outside pressures which now include the changing climate which is adjusting the habitat around us. In the past when the climate changed we were free to move with the changes, but today we are for the most part fixed in place. This will cause our cultures to have to adapt in ways that we have never before had to face.

Tribal Nations need to have access to adequate resources to work with each other and with the US and state governments to help mitigate the negative impacts being caused by this changing climate. There are two ways that this can be accomplished. One is to remove restrictions on Tribal Nations that make it difficult for us to help ourselves. Better access to capital and economic development opportunities is needed. The ability to

exercise our sovereign rights to regulate and develop our own lands without excessive US government oversight and regulation is long overdue.

The second way to help Tribal Nations is to adequately fund existing programs that are used by tribes to prepare for the climate challenges that we are facing. Equity in funding opportunities to create and coordinate climate planning amongst our tribal nations and with other governments around us is essential.

In some areas of the country several steps have already been taken. In Michigan for example, I was appointed to represent tribal interests on the Michigan Climate Action Council. The resulting Climate Action Plan that the Council presented to Michigan's governor contained several tribally specific recommendations including the negotiation of a Tribal State Climate Accord. This has been completed and adopted (*see attached copy*).

Through the provisions of this accord, twice yearly staff level meetings among state and tribal officials are held to discuss common issues in dealing with the changing climate. In at least one other state, tribal interests were recognized in the adoption of a Climate Action Plan.

Conclusion

To guide the implementation of the Declaration's provisions a comprehensive review of existing United States laws and relationships with Tribal Nations needs to be begun. This needs to be done carefully and thoughtfully including all parties which are affected. Land uses, regulatory systems, territorial jurisdiction, agricultural development, and disaster preparedness and relief are just a few of the areas for review. A special joint commission of the US and Tribal Nations should be created and charged with this review creating a record that will inform the process of implementation.

Indigenous Peoples traditional teachings guide us in our relationship with our Mother the Earth. We know that we must respect the forces of nature, we must seek balance in our lives and communities and nations, we must consider the consequences of our actions through the coming seven generations. We have gifts, knowledge, traditions and a way of life that has been handed down from the preceding generations. These gifts not only benefit our own peoples, they also enrich and provide guidance for the preservation of all humankind. We seek the strength and wisdom to do our part to continue this sacred responsibility.

I thank the committee for its consideration of this testimony.

Attachments

- 1) United League of Indigenous Peoples Treaty, 2008
- 2) Statement from the First Roundtable for the World Parliament Of Indigenous Peoples, 2011
- 3) Message of the Living Spirit of the Convening of Indigenous Peoples for the Healing of Mother Earth at the Cultural Territory of the Maya, 2008
- 4) Mystic Lake Declaration, 2009
- 5) Tribal/State of Michigan Climate Accord, 2009



UNITED LEAGUE OF INDIGENOUS NATIONS TREATY

PREAMBLE

We, the signatory Indigenous Nations and Peoples, hereby pledge mutual recognition of our inherent rights and power to govern ourselves and our ancestral homelands and traditional territories. Each signatory nation, having provided evidence that their respective governing body has taken action in accordance with their own custom, law and or tradition to knowingly agree to and adopt the terms of this treaty, hereby establish the political, social, cultural and economic relations contemplated herein.

PRINCIPLES

Recognizing each other as self-governing Indigenous Nations, we subscribe to the following principles:

1. The Creator has made us part of and inseparable from the natural world around us. This truth binds us together and gives rise to a shared commitment to care for, conserve, and protect the land, air, water and animal life within our usual, customary and traditional territories.
2. Our inherent customary rights to self-governance and self-determination have existed since time immemorial, have been bestowed by the Creator and are defined in accordance with our own laws, values, customs and mores.
3. Political, social, cultural and economic relationships between our Indigenous Nations have existed since time immemorial and our right to continue such relationships are inseparable from our inherent Indigenous rights of nationhood. Indigenous Peoples have the right of self-determination and, by virtue of that right, our Peoples freely determine our political status and freely pursue our social, cultural and economic development.
4. No other political jurisdiction, including nation states and their governmental agencies or subdivisions, possess governmental power over any of our Indigenous nations, our people and our usual, customary and traditional territories.
5. Our inherent, aboriginal control and enjoyment of our territories includes our collective rights over the environment consisting of the air, lands, inland waters, oceans, seas, sea ice, flora, fauna and all other surface and sub-surface resources.
6. Our Indigenous rights include all traditional and ecological knowledge derived from our relationship with our lands, air and waters from time immemorial, the exercise of conservation practices, traditional ceremonies, medicinal and healing practices and all other expressions of art and culture.

GOALS

This Treaty is for the purpose of achieving the following goals:

1. To establish supportive bonds among signatory Indigenous Nations in order to secure, recover, and promote, through political, social, cultural and economic unity, the rights of all our peoples, the protection and recovery of our homelands and for the well-being of all our future generations.
2. To establish a foundation for the exercise of contemporary Indigenous nation sovereignty, without regard to existing or future international political boundaries of non-Indigenous nations, for the following purposes: (a) protecting our cultural properties, including but not limited to sacred songs, signs and symbols, traditional ecological knowledge and other forms of cultural heritage rights by collectively affirming the principle that our own Indigenous laws and customs regarding our cultural properties are prior and paramount to the assertion of any other laws or jurisdiction including international bodies and agencies, (b) protecting our Indigenous lands, air and waters from environmental destruction through exercising our rights of political representation as Indigenous nations before all national and international bodies that have been charged, through international treaties, agreements and conventions, with environmental protection responsibilities, (c) engaging in mutually beneficial trade and commerce between Indigenous nations and the economic enterprises owned and operated collectively by Indigenous peoples and by individual citizens of our Indigenous nations, and, (d) preserving and protecting the human rights of our Indigenous people from such violations as involuntary servitude, human trafficking, or any other forms of oppression.
3. To develop an effective and meaningful process to promote communication and cooperation among the Indigenous Nations on all other common issues, concerns, pursuits, and initiatives.
4. To ensure that scholarly exchanges and joint study on strategies of self-determination are undertaken by Indigenous scholars.

MUTUAL COVENANTS

We, the signatory Indigenous Nations, are committed to providing the following mutual aid and assistance, to the best of our ability and in accordance with our own prior and paramount Indigenous laws, customs and traditions:

1. Exchanging economic, legal, political, traditional and technical knowledge regarding the protection of Indigenous cultural properties.
2. Collaborating on research on environmental issues that impact Indigenous homelands, including baseline studies and socio-economic assessments that consider the cultural, social and sustainable uses of Indigenous Peoples' territories and resources.
3. Participating in trade and commerce missions to lay a foundation for business relations and the development of an international, integrated Indigenous economy, and

Each signatory Indigenous Nation shall:

1. Appoint a coordinator or responsible official for Treaty matters;
2. Identify and establish an inter-Nation coordination office and communication network to assist in assembling data, information, knowledge and research needed to effectively address substantial issues of common concern;
3. Coordinate statements of policy and information on Treaty matters, especially information to be disseminated to the media;
4. Participate in periodic reviews and strategy planning sessions as needed.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of this Treaty is August 1, 2007.

RATIFICATION

Following the effective date of this Treaty, any other Indigenous Nation may ratify this Treaty at a meeting of the United League of Indigenous Nations. Ratifying Indigenous Nations may attach explanations or clarifications expressing their respective cultural understandings associated with the provisions of the Treaty through a Statement of Understandings which must be consistent with the spirit and intent of the Treaty.

Covelyn Jefferson
Lummi Nation *We - Yak - gwelk.*

Chief Janet Carabail X
Sucker Creek First Nation 150 A

Aroha Te Pareake Mead
Te Runanga O Ngati Awa

Darje Ray
Ngarrindjeri Nation

Andrew Brown
Douglas Village of the Tlingit Nation

Michael M. M. M.
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Ar Mla
Akiak Native Community

Robert Dick
We Wai Kai Nation

Debbie Wachendorf
MAKAH TRIBE

Robert Sam, Chief
Songhees Nation

Quinn Lu
Hoh Indian Tribe

World Parliament of Indigenous Peoples

First Round Table

07 – 10 January 2011

Booshakthi Kendra, Tumkur, India

We, 39 Indigenous delegates from 10 countries who attended the First round Table of the World Parliament of Indigenous Peoples from 07 to 10 January 2011 at the first ever Dalit Ashram, Booshakthi Kendra (1), Tumkur in India, make the following Statements.

Preamble

Today the world is in need of Indigenous Peoples to ensure its survival into the future. The Indigenous Peoples of the world have sustained life with vibrancy, despite thousands of years of assault on their dignity and life-ways by dominant and colonial powers. The inclusive worldviews of the Indigenous Peoples have inherent capacity of providing the critical values and ethics, understandings, processes and protocols of respect and reciprocity, which unfold in ways that include relationship with all of life, ensuring that everyone is valued for their own unique gifts and contributions, which is the essence of real leadership and governance.

The unrelenting assault on the cultures, histories and dignity of the Indigenous Peoples and the living Universe must be understood and responded to creatively by Indigenous Peoples themselves. The First Round Table of the World Parliament of Indigenous Peoples asserts that while we recognize our cultural differences, we simultaneously and synergistically gather together our common cultural ethics and ancestral understandings toward the fulfilment of our self-assertion, self-actualization, self-determination, sovereignty and ultimately, our transformation. These at once ancient and contemporary strengths will enable us to move within the formation of nation-states within which we find ourselves, transforming them in ways that embody Indigenous ethics of respect, relationship and reciprocity for Indigenous communities, along with all other peoples, particularly marginalised and/or excluded communities. The historic First Round Table in Tumkur, India has been held with the purpose of forming a World Parliament of Indigenous Peoples, which will provide an alternative model of leadership, protocols and understandings, envisioning and expanding into a future in which all the world's children have the possibility of living healthy, happy and fulfilled lives, secure in their identity, strong in their culture, proud of who they are, and able to carry themselves with honour, respect and dignity into our collective future.

Statements

1. Humanity has the opportunity to benefit and grow from the collective spiritual strengths that arise in the global spirit of Indigenous Peoples and have been honed in their struggles.

2. The mindless exploitation of the cosmos in its totality poses a serious problem to the Indigenous Peoples, as we consider Earth as our Mother and we have lived in harmony with nature for millennia. Any threat to the Earth and other planets is a simultaneous and inseparable threat to the existence of Indigenous Peoples. Our suffering has been inextricably intertwined with the sufferings of the cosmos. The World Parliament of Indigenous Peoples, when it becomes a reality in world history will become a veritable mouthpiece of the peoples of the world.

3. The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples signals a commitment to Indigenous Peoples that has not been much demonstrated to this point.

4. Further, this adoption shows that the time has come for Indigenous Peoples to unite in collective action aimed at creating benefits for Indigenous communities and the world at large.

5. The formation of indigenous parliaments and indigenous political entities will facilitate this unity, as well as facilitate collaboration, discussion, decision making, monitoring roles and support for Indigenous communities and individuals.

6. We see merit in developing closer ties among the political entities of Indigenous Peoples. We are confident that our knowledge, experience, and worldviews can be valuable resources in addressing common challenges for human beings, animals and plants and in assuring our survival. We see these possibilities as both opportunity and responsibility.

7. In anticipation and preparation for the United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014, we invite indigenous parliaments, governments, and other indigenous political entities to join the efforts in recognizing our full and just participation in the global political arena.

8. The role of the World Parliament will also be to raise awareness in the dominant world about the true nature and value of indigeneity. The world will then realize that Indigenous Peoples have the answer to most problems that beset the world that is groping in darkness today.

The following delegates took part in the historic First Round Table of the World Parliament of Indigenous Peoples in Tumkur, India.

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|------------------------|-------|
| 1. Ms. Ang Dawa Sherpa | Nepal |
| 2. Ms. Shanti Jirel | Nepal |

3. Mr. Walter Hahn	Germany
4. Ms. Heidi Oline Salmi	Sapmi, Norway
5. Mr. Jarle Jonassen	Sapmi, Norway
6. Ms. Maria Therese Aslaksen	Sapmi, Norway
7. Mr. Rune Fjellheim	Sapmi, Norway
8. Ms. Kirsten Anne Guttorm	Sapmi, Norway
9. Ms. Silja Somby	Sapmi, Norway
10. Ms. Donna Ngaronoa Gardiner	New Zealand
11. Mr. Tiopira Porutu Keith McDowell	New Zealand
12. Mr. Charles Royal	New Zealand
13. Ms. Trish Johnston	New Zealand
14. Ms. Monica Royal	New Zealand
15. Mr. Kerry Laiana Wong	Hawaii
16. Ms. Eomailani Kukahiko	Hawaii
17. Ms. Margaret Jane Maaka	Hawaii
18. Ms. Darlene Hoskins McKenzie	Australia
19. Ms. Debrah Ann Hocking	Australia
20. Mr. Lenzerini Federico	Italy
21. Mr. D Thangaraj IAS	India
22. Ms. Rose Mary	Nagaland, India
23. Mr. Anil Gaikwad	India
24. Dr. Ruth Manorama	India
25. Dr. Nara Singh	Manipur, India
26. Mr. Jon Ross	Alaska
27. Ms. Leandra Ross	Alaska
28. Ms. Jessica Ross	Alaska
29. Ms. Ruby Shannon Vail	USA
30. Mr. John Vail	USA
31. Ms. Amanda Holmes	N. America
32. Ms. June Lorenzo	N. America
33. Mr. Frank David Ettawageshik	N. America
34. Ms. Rosalie Little Thunder	N. America
35. Mr. Tupac Enrique	N. America
36. Mr. V B Rawat	India
37. Ms. Jyothi	India
38. Mr. M C Raj	India
39. Ms. Arul Kani	India

1. Booshakthi Kendra is the first ever Dalit Ashram in India initiated by Jyothi and Raj in Tumkur, India. It means Mother Earth Centre. It has the avowed purpose of being the springboard of learning, indigenous spirituality, indigenous philosophy and through these learning also generate liberative action for indigenous and other excluded peoples of the world.



**THE CONVENING OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
FOR THE HEALING OF
MOTHER EARTH**

Dear Friends,

It is a great honor to share the “*Message of the Living Spirit of the Convening of Indigenous Peoples for the Healing of Mother Earth,*” the outcome of the Convening that took place in the Cultural Territory of the Maya in Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico on March 10-13, 2008. At the direction of the participants at this gathering, this message is a Call To Action to Indigenous peoples, and to all peoples of the world.

The *Convening for the Protection of Mother Earth* was planned by and for Indigenous peoples from North America to bring together Indigenous leaders, including spiritual and traditional healers, elders, wisdom keepers, and practitioners, to address the need for immediate intervention and action, based upon our original teachings, in order to ensure a healthy future for coming generations. We recognize that our current and future actions must not be based upon the same worldview that has brought such global destruction to Mother Earth. We must reclaim and revitalize the wisdom passed on to us from our Ancestors about how to be responsible to each other and to the Natural World.

This Message was created through ceremony and prayer, but it is up to each of us to find ways to give this Message life and meaning as we all take steps to protect the Natural World. It is intended to be a

living document that serves as a source of inspiration to Indigenous peoples, governments, and civil society, to take our responsibilities to protect Mother Earth seriously, and to provide some guidance for moving forward.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the participation and deliberations of the Indigenous peoples, representing Indigenous nations and communities from throughout North America, and gratefully thank the following organizations for their generous contributions and support including: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Health Canada, The Mexican Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, The Mexican National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples, and the Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

Please visit the *Convening for the Protection of Mother Earth* website for further information at: www.indigenousconvening.com.

Message of the Living Spirit of the *Convening of Indigenous Peoples for the Protection of Mother Earth* - March 13, 2008 -

Message of the Living Spirit of the *Convening of Indigenous Peoples for the Healing of Mother Earth* at the Cultural Territory of the Maya

March 10-13, 2008

Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico

INTRODUCTION

Having been welcomed to convene in ceremony at the sacred site of Palenque (*Cerco de Estacas*) to heed the call of Mother Earth and honor the sacred elements of water, air, earth and fire in unity as Indigenous Peoples of Lak Ná Lum upon the traditional territory of the Maya People on the 10 -13 of March 2008, we commit in unity to the Message of the Living Spirit.

We the Indigenous Nations, Peoples, tribes, pueblos, communities, villages, situated within the geopolitical boundaries claimed by the nation-states of Mexico, Canada, and the United States hereby make this declaration and urgent message to the world on the basis of our spirituality and the natural biological Laws of Life on Mother Earth, the Sacred Life-Giver. It is our inherent birthright and responsibility as the original free and independent Peoples of Turtle Island to care for Mother Earth in keeping with our Original Instructions from Creation.

These natural laws are inclusive of Honor, Respect, Love, Compassion, Peace, and Friendship. It is in keeping with these natural laws and Indigenous values that the traditional knowledge and wisdom bequeathed to us by our ancestors, and carried today by our Elders, teaches us how to live in balance with the Four Sacred Elements of Life: Earth, Water, Air, and Fire. We are the guardians of these elements of Life.

Fire is meant to ignite and unite the spirit of humanity. Water is the life blood of all living things. Air is the sacred breath of life. Earth is the Mother that nurtures us all. Beyond the tangible aspect of our relationships with all the sacred elements, there is intangible interaction. The role of the sacred elements is central in our customs, traditions, stories, songs, and dances.

The Indigenous prophecies foretell the urgent environmental crisis we face today. The Indigenous Peoples have the responsibility to provide our traditional knowledge to the world. The ancestral ways of Indigenous peoples have the power to heal our Mother Earth. We demand that the nation-state and state governments stop the destruction and violations against the four elements of Life.

Western legal and religious histories, philosophies and laws have totally disrupted our ways of life. Our traditional spiritual ways and knowledge systems honor the interconnections and interrelationships of the Web of Life, and sustain, not destroy Mother Earth.

VISION

As caretakers of Mother Earth, speaking with one spirit, one mind, one heart and as one family, utilizing the original teachings given to human beings by the Creator, we will restore balance and harmony to Mother Earth and all her children.

Guided by the wisdom and vision of our ancestors in the spirit world, elders, spiritual leaders and traditional and Indigenous community leaders, we understand the Natural Law given to us by the Creator guides our traditional way of life in harmony with all creation upon the land and waters of Mother Earth.

THE PAIN OF MOTHER EARTH

As the peoples of the land, we are the first to hear, see, feel, taste and spiritually sense the pain of Mother Earth. She is dying and we hear her cry. Her heart is wounded and her pain is our pain, her illness is our illness, our survival is dependent upon her survival.

As Indigenous peoples, we have a spiritual and familial relationship to the sacred elements of water, air, earth and fire, and understand their holistic and inseparable relationship with each other. Through the western claim of asserting ownership over these sacred elements their spiritual interdependence is being destroyed.

Water

Minan ja' Minan kuxtal.

Without water, there is no life.

The water represents the life-blood and the sustenance of all life. The purity and natural flow of water is necessary for maintaining the interdependent balance between all forms of life. Our sacred birthright includes the rivers, streams, natural springs, hot waters, lakes, underground aquifers, seas, bays, inlets, oceans, ice, snow, rain and all forms of and bodies of water.

Deforestation and the removal of flora and fauna have resulted in the destruction of water sources. Organic and inorganic waste, refuse, and industrial wastewater are dumped directly into rivers and water sources that people need for drinking. As a result of toxins and pollutants, and industrial wastes many sources of water are unfit to drink and lead to serious and deadly health problems for humans and other forms of life. Indigenous peoples are often in the situation of having to choose between thirst and the possibility of serious illness or death from drinking polluted and contaminated water.

Dams and hydroelectric projects pose a massive problem for the integrity of ecosystems and the ability of Indigenous Peoples to maintain their traditional ways of life, hunting, fishing, trapping, and harvesting. As a result of diversion and depletion of pristine water sources, many Indigenous Peoples do not have access to water. Regulatory frameworks also infringe upon Indigenous peoples' rights to, use of, and access to water. The privatization and commodification of water is a critical issue. No one owns water.

Air

The air is the Messenger that announces the rains, it is a voice of our ancestors, and it is the central element for the preservation of cultures. The main causes of air pollution are industrialization, militarization, electricity generation, energy generation from nonrenewable sources, means of transport and inadequate management of toxic wastes. This situation threatens the health of our ecosystems, putting life at risk. Air pollution caused by automobile exhaust, has great impacts on the respiratory health of all peoples, particularly in urban areas. The pollution carried by the wind from coal-fire plants emit toxins negatively impact peoples at great distances. The burning of oil, gas, and coal ("fossil fuels") causing the global warming is the primary source of human-induced climate change.

Earth

Our sacred lands are under siege. The Western world improperly asserts that they have a right to extract the natural resources from our lands and territories without regard for our rights. This extraction has left in its wake a legacy of contamination, waste and loss of life. Indigenous peoples are facing the negative impacts of pollution, mining, deforestation, logging, oil prospecting, dumping of toxic waste, genetic engineering, fertilizers and pesticides, and soil erosion, all of which contribute to a severe loss of biodiversity. All of these threaten food security, subsistence lifestyles, human health and our ability to sustain our peoples. Our peoples are suffering from high rates of cancers, diabetes, heart disease and other serious diseases previously unknown to our peoples. In the name of conservation of biodiversity, Indigenous Peoples have been displaced from our territories designated as protected areas. There is a direct correlation between the health of the land and the holistic health and well-being of the people. This has particular and significant impact on Indigenous Women - the rape and desecration of Mother Earth is reflected in what has happened to Indigenous Women.

Fire

The fire that sparks life is being disrespected by technology of the industrialized world that allows it to take life such as the fire in the coal-fired powered plants, the toxic waste incinerators, the fossil-fuel combustion engine and other polluting technologies that add to greenhouse gases, a primary cause of climate change. The abuse of the sacred element of fire conflicts with Indigenous knowledge and practices. Human beings are using fire in an exploitive, manipulative, destructive and deadly manner. The culturally inappropriate use of fire is manifested in the atomic bomb, military weaponry and warfare, nuclear power and radioactive waste, the extractive energy industries of coal, oil and gas, and the burning of forests and grasslands that result in the extinction of flora and fauna within our ancestral territories.

THE HEALING OF MOTHER EARTH

Based on our inherent sovereignty and consistent with our inherent birthright to self-determination in international law, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we affirm our responsibility to protect water, air, earth and fire. Because of our relationship with our lands, waters and natural surroundings since time immemorial, we carry the knowledge, ideas and solutions that the world needs today. We know how to live with Mother Earth because we are her children. We commit to sharing certain teachings of our peoples to all humanity so that they can find their original, sacred relationship to

Mother Earth, Father Sky, and all Creation. It is our responsibility given to us by the Creator to speak for the plants, for the animals, and all life to bring their message to all of peoples and nations of the world.

Traditional knowledge can aid in providing accurate ecological baselines embedded in and carried in Indigenous languages, including in traditional names of places, stories and oral narratives that reveal the original roles of natural habitats as given to us by the Creator. These baselines are critical for societal adaptation to environmental change, land use change and climate change, as well as indigenous cultural survival in the face of these detrimental changes in the world we live in today.

Call to Action to Indigenous Peoples

Based on our inherent sovereignty and consistent with our right of self-determination in international law, we affirm our inherent birthright to water, air, earth and fire. We call upon our Indigenous brothers and sisters to fulfill our responsibilities bequeathed by our ancestors to secure a healthy environment for present and future generations. We know how to live with Mother Earth because we are her children. We are a powerful spiritual people. It is this spiritual connection to Mother Earth, Father Sky, and all Creation that the rest of the World must respect. Our extended family includes our Mother Earth, Father Sky, and our brothers and sisters, the animal and plant life, therefore, it is the responsibility given to us by the Creator to speak for the plants, for the animals, for the rest of Creation, for the future of all the children, for the future of Mother Earth and Father Sky. We commit to continue our traditional practices for the environment based on standards consistent with the Natural Laws of the Creator for the benefit of future generations.

We call upon all Indigenous Peoples to:

Honor and defend all the sacred elements by conducting their traditional ceremonies and prayers revitalizing and perpetuating traditional values and knowledge systems and applying them to today's realities. We the Indigenous Peoples at this Convening, offer to share the following gifts of knowledge through our own skills that have been developed and through proven best practices/successful indigenous practices or knowledge that have been successful:

- Develop recycling capabilities for plastic, paper, glass and metals in our own communities, ending the use of plastic;
 - Exercise traditional ways of growing crops; and
 - Plant more trees to clean the air and water, a holistic reforestation with endemic plants.
- Educate Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people beginning with our children and including individuals, communities, governments, institutions and the media about the role of these sacred elements in our world and our livelihoods.

- Create and develop an Indigenous education circle without borders, based on traditional knowledge using appropriate tools of science to protect our sacred elements. This network can include traditional practices, research experience, development of curriculum for our children, and a library of knowledge that can be shared with all of our Peoples.
- Collaborate and organize events, gatherings and conferences for the protection of the sacred elements.
- Acknowledge the ancestral time in uniting “All Nations, All Faiths, One Prayer” on June 21st to pray for united healing.
- Assert and exercise our inherent, prior and collective rights to manage, maintain and protect our lands and territories.
- Express our full support for the existing Indigenous organizations and associations which are currently advocating for the protection, stewardship and sustainability of water as a resource and as a part of Indigenous identity, spirituality, culture and nationhood.
- There are numerous documents, resources, tools, instruments, treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements that have been created by or in partnership with Indigenous Peoples. We encourage more Indigenous Peoples to create such tools in accordance with their respective customs, protocols and laws, to articulate, implement or enforce our inherent rights and in exercising self determination. We also urge Indigenous Peoples to share such tools, skills, knowledge and resources with each other.
- Exercise the right of free, prior and informed consent to any actions that may affect their lands and territories.

Call to Action to the Global Community

Acknowledging the dignity of all life, peoples and nations, we call upon the global community to unite with Indigenous Peoples to learn the teachings and wisdom as bestowed to us by the Creator in order to heal Mother Earth. The realization of this Call to Action will only occur with the full, active and collaborative partnership of all peoples and nations. We call upon Leaders of all Nations of the World at all levels of decision making, to accept responsibility for the welfare of future generations. Living by the traditional principles and values of Honor, Respect, Love, Compassion, Peace and Friendship, we call upon the Global Community:

International

- Fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Protect Indigenous peoples from the negative impacts of trade agreements.

- Recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international law, in the implementation of international treaties, conventions and agreements relevant to the environment, trade, and human rights including:
 - Convention on Biological Diversity, including Articles 8(j) and 10.
 - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol
 - International Labour Organization Convention (ILO) 107 and 169
 - Organization of American States
 - OAS Proposed Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
 - Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
 - General Assembly resolution 1803 (XVII) of 14 December 1962, “Permanent sovereignty over natural resources”
 - Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

National

- Commit to the full implementation at the domestic level of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- That all levels of nation-state and state governments live up to their commitments to Indigenous Peoples by recognizing our inherent rights, cultural rights and rights held pursuant to treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.

- Implement a system of legislation, regulation, fines or taxation for excessive use or abuse of any of the four sacred elements.
- Enter into a collaborative, and active partnership with Indigenous Peoples to protect, sustain and maintain sacred sites of Indigenous Peoples.
- Governments should guarantee the restructuring and repair of the damage done to the cultural patrimony and territory of Indigenous Peoples.

Non-Governmental and Civil Society

- Civil society and non-governmental organizations to involve and support Indigenous Peoples in the protection of our lands, territories and rights. This includes advocacy concerning any activity impacting the four sacred elements.
- Encourage civil society, and non-governmental organizations to respect and honor the roles and responsibilities of Indigenous Peoples in carrying out their mandates and roles;

Private Sector and State Corporations

- Indigenous laws governing the four sacred elements must be respected by the private sector, in addition to relevant international, and national laws that are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in carrying out their business or projects.
- Ensure the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples prior to commencing any undertaking which impacts the four sacred elements, including assessments or exploration, and involving the participation of governments if necessary.

DECLARATION

We, the Convening of Indigenous Peoples for the Healing of Mother Earth, support the spirit and intent of this message and send it out to all Indigenous peoples and to the World as a living document.

THE MYSTIC LAKE DECLARATION

From the Native Peoples Native Homelands Climate Change Workshop II:

Indigenous Perspectives and Solutions

At Mystic Lake on the Homelands of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux

Community, Prior Lake, Minnesota

November 21, 2009

As community members, youth and elders, spiritual and traditional leaders, Native organizations and supporters of our Indigenous Nations, we have gathered on November 18-21, 2009 at Mystic Lake in the traditional homelands of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Dakota Oyate. This Second Native Peoples Native Homelands Climate Workshop builds upon the Albuquerque Declaration and work done at the 1998 Native Peoples Native Homelands Climate Change Workshop held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We choose to work together to fulfill our sacred duties, listening to the teachings of our elders and the voices of our youth, to act wisely to carry out our responsibilities to enhance the health and respect the sacredness of Mother Earth, and to demand Climate Justice now. We acknowledge that to deal effectively with global climate change and global warming issues all sovereigns must work together to adapt and take action on real solutions that will ensure our collective existence.

We hereby declare, affirm, and assert our inalienable rights as well as responsibilities as members of sovereign Native Nations. In doing so, we expect to be active participants with full representation in United States and international legally binding treaty agreements regarding climate, energy, biodiversity, food sovereignty, water and sustainable development policies affecting our peoples and our respective Homelands on Turtle Island (North America) and Pacific Islands.

We are of the Earth. The Earth is the source of life to be protected, not merely a resource to be exploited. Our ancestors' remains lie within her. Water is her lifeblood. We are dependent upon her for our shelter and our sustenance. Our lifeways are the original "green economies." We have our place and our responsibilities within Creation's sacred order. We feel the sustaining joy as things occur in harmony. We feel the pain of disharmony when we witness the dishonor of the natural order of Creation and the degradation of Mother Earth and her companion Moon.

We need to stop the disturbance of the sacred sites on Mother Earth so that she may heal and restore the balance in Creation. We ask the world community to join with the Indigenous Peoples to pray on summer solstice for the healing of all the sacred sites on Mother Earth.

The well-being of the natural environment predicts the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual longevity of our Peoples and the Circle of Life. Mother Earth's health and that of our Indigenous Peoples are intrinsically intertwined. Unless our homelands are in a state of good health our Peoples will not be truly healthy. This inseparable relationship must

be respected for the sake of our future generations. In this Declaration, we invite humanity to join with us to improve our collective human behavior so that we may develop a more sustainable world – a world where the inextricable relationship of biological, and environmental diversity, and cultural diversity is affirmed and protected. We have the power and responsibility to change. We can preserve, protect, and fulfill our sacred duties to live with respect in this wonderful Creation. However, we can also forget our responsibilities, disrespect Creation, cause disharmony and imperil our future and the future of others.

At Mystic Lake, we reviewed the reports of indigenous science, traditional knowledge and cultural scholarship in cooperation with non-native scientists and scholars. We shared our fears, concerns and insights. If current trends continue, native trees will no longer find habitable locations in our forests, fish will no longer find their streams livable, and humanity will find their homelands flooded or drought-stricken due to the changing weather. Our Native Nations have already disproportionately suffered the negative compounding effects of global warming and a changing climate.

The United States and other industrialized countries have an addiction to the high consumption of energy. Mother Earth and her natural resources cannot sustain the consumption and production needs of this modern industrialized society and its dominant economic paradigm, which places value on the rapid economic growth, the quest for corporate and individual accumulation of wealth, and a race to exploit natural resources. The non-regenerative production system creates too much waste and toxic pollutions. We recognize the need for the United States and other industrialized countries to focus on new economies, governed by the absolute limits and boundaries of ecological sustainability, the carrying capacities of the Mother Earth, a more equitable sharing of global and local resources, encouragement and support of self sustaining communities, and respect and support for the rights of Mother Earth and her companion Moon.

In recognizing the root causes of climate change, participants call upon the industrialized countries and the world to work towards decreasing dependency on fossil fuels. We call for a moratorium on all new exploration for oil, gas, coal and uranium as a first step towards the full phase-out of fossil fuels, without nuclear power, with a just transition to sustainable jobs, energy and environment. We take this position and make this recommendation based on our concern over the disproportionate social, cultural, spiritual, environmental and climate impacts on Indigenous Peoples, who are the first and the worst affected by the disruption of intact habitats, and the least responsible for such impacts.

Indigenous peoples must call for the most stringent and binding emission reduction targets. Carbon emissions for developed countries must be reduced by no less than 40%, preferably 49% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 95% by 2050. We call for national and global actions to stabilize CO₂ concentrations below 350 parts per million (ppm) and limiting temperature increases to below 1.5°C.

We challenge climate mitigation solutions to abandon false solutions to climate change that negatively impact Indigenous Peoples' rights, lands, air, oceans, forests, territories

and waters. These include nuclear energy, large-scale dams, geo-engineering techniques, clean coal technologies, carbon capture and sequestration, bio-fuels, tree plantations, and international market-based mechanisms such as carbon trading and offsets, the Clean Development Mechanisms and Flexible Mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol and forest offsets. The only real offsets are those renewable energy developments that actually displace fossil fuel-generated energy. We recommend the United States sign on to the Kyoto Protocol and to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We are concerned with how international carbon markets set up a framework for dealing with greenhouse gases that secure the property rights of heavy Northern fossil fuel users over the world's carbon-absorbing capacity while creating new opportunities for corporate profit through trade. The system starts by translating existing pollution into a tradable commodity, the rights to which are allocated in accordance with a limit set by States or intergovernmental agencies. In establishing property rights over the world's carbon dump, the largest number of rights is granted (mostly for free) to those who have been most responsible for pollution in the first place. At UN COP15, the conservation of forests is being brought into a property right issue concerning trees and carbon. With some indigenous communities it is difficult and sometimes impossible to reconcile with traditional spiritual beliefs the participation in climate mitigation that commodifies the sacredness of air (carbon), trees and life. Climate change mitigation and sustainable forest management must be based on different mindsets with full respect for nature, and not solely on market-based mechanisms.

We recognize the link between climate change and food security that affects Indigenous traditional food systems. We declare our Native Nations and our communities, waters, air, forests, oceans, sea ice, traditional lands and territories to be "Food Sovereignty Areas," defined and directed by Indigenous Peoples according to our customary laws, free from extractive industries, unsustainable energy development, deforestation, and free from using food crops and agricultural lands for large scale bio-fuels.

We encourage our communities to exchange information related to the sustainable and regenerative use of land, water, sea ice, traditional agriculture, forest management, ancestral seeds, food plants, animals and medicines that are essential in developing climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, and will restore our food sovereignty, food independence, and strengthen our Indigenous families and Native Nations.

We reject the assertion of intellectual property rights over the genetic resources and traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples which results in the alienation and commodification of those things that are sacred and essential to our lives and cultures. We reject industrial modes of food production that promote the use of chemical substances, genetically engineered seeds and organisms. Therefore, we affirm our right to possess, control, protect and pass on the indigenous seeds, medicinal plants, traditional knowledge originating from our lands and territories for the benefit of our future generations.

We can make changes in our lives and actions as individuals and as Nations that will lessen our contribution to the problems. In order for reality to shift, in order for solutions to major problems to be found and realized, we must transition away from the patterns of an industrialized mindset, thought and behavior that created those problems. It is time to exercise desperately needed Indigenous ingenuity – *Indigenuity* – inspired by our ancient intergenerational knowledge and wisdom given to us by our natural relatives. We recognize and support the position of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC), operating as the Indigenous Caucus within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), that is requesting language within the overarching principles of the outcomes of the Copenhagen UNFCCC 15th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) and beyond Copenhagen, that would ensure respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples, including their rights to lands, territories, forests and resources to ensure their full and effective participation including free, prior and informed consent. It is crucial that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is entered into all appropriate negotiating texts for it is recognized as the minimum international standard for the protection of rights, survival, protection and well-being of Indigenous Peoples, particularly with regard to health, subsistence, sustainable housing and infrastructure, and clean energy development.

As Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples living within the occupied territories of the United States, we acknowledge with concern, the refusal of the United States to support negotiating text that would recognize applicable universal human rights instruments and agreements, including the UNDRIP, and further safeguard principles that would ensure their full and effective participation including free, prior and informed consent. We will do everything humanly possible by exercising our sovereign government-to-government relationship with the U.S. to seek justice on this issue.

Our Indian languages are encoded with accumulated ecological knowledge and wisdom that extends back through oral history to the beginning of time. Our ancestors created land and water relationship systems premised upon the understanding that all life forms are relatives – not resources. We understand that we as human beings have a sacred and ceremonial responsibility to care for and maintain, through our original instructions, the health and well-being of all life within our traditional territories and Native Homelands. We will encourage our leadership and assume our role in supporting a just transition into a green economy, freeing ourselves from dependence on a carbon-based fossil fuel economy. This transition will be based upon development of an indigenous agricultural economy comprised of traditional food systems, sustainable buildings and infrastructure, clean energy and energy efficiency, and natural resource management systems based upon indigenous science and traditional knowledge. We are committed to development of economic systems that enable life-enhancement as a core component. We thus dedicate ourselves to the restoration of true wealth for all Peoples. In keeping with our traditional knowledge, this wealth is based not on monetary riches but rather on healthy relationships, relationships with each other, and relationships with all of the other natural elements and beings of creation.

In order to provide leadership in the development of green economies of life-enhancement, we must end the chronic underfunding of our Native educational institutions and ensure adequate funding sources are maintained. We recognize the important role of our Native K-12 schools and tribal colleges and universities that serve as education and training centers that can influence and nurture a much needed *Indigenuity* towards understanding climate change, nurturing clean renewable energy technologies, seeking solutions and building sustainable communities.

The world needs to understand that the Earth is a living female organism – our Mother and our Grandmother. We are kin. As such, she needs to be loved and protected. We need to give back what we take from her in respectful mutuality. We need to walk gently. These Original Instructions are the natural spiritual laws, which are supreme. Science can urgently work with traditional knowledge keepers to restore the health and well-being of our Mother and Grandmother Earth.

As we conclude this meeting we, the participating spiritual and traditional leaders, members and supporters of our Indigenous Nations, declare our intention to continue to fulfill our sacred responsibilities, to redouble our efforts to enable sustainable life-enhancing economies, to walk gently on our Mother Earth, and to demand that we be a part of the decision-making and negotiations that impact our inherent and treaty-defined rights. Achievement of this vision for the future, guided by our traditional knowledge and teachings, will benefit all Peoples on the Earth.

Approved by Acclamation and Individual Sign-ons.

**Intergovernmental Accord between the
Tribal Leaders of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Michigan
and the
Governor of the State of Michigan
to Address the Crucial Issue of Climate Change**

Whereas, the Tribal leaders of the federally recognized Indian Tribes in Michigan and the Governor of the state of Michigan recognize the vital importance of the health and quality of the Great Lakes, inland waters, air, geography, ecosystems, plants, and wildlife to the physical, cultural, and economic welfare and future of all of our citizens;

Whereas, climate change poses a grave and immediate threat to the environment, quality of life, and economy for all of our citizens;

Whereas, each of the Tribes and the state of Michigan are individually exploring ways to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, primarily CO₂, which cause global warming;

Whereas, the Tribal leaders and the Governor understand that climate change is not confined to geographic boundaries and that the prevention and mitigation of significant global warming must include changes in social, economic, and governmental activities;

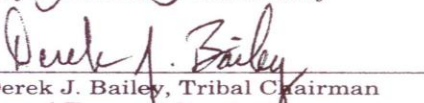
Whereas, combining their expertise and resources will aid the state and tribes to meet their shared commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;

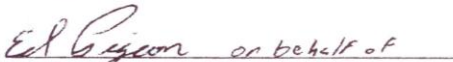
NOW, THEREFORE, the undersigned Tribal Leaders and the Governor affirm their joint commitment to combat global warming through reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and, in furtherance of this goal, agree to designate appropriate representatives of their respective environmental or natural resources programs who shall meet at least twice each year as the Tribal-State Climate Change Forum. The purpose of the Forum is to share information, develop analyses, and propose action plans to address global warming through methods including but not limited to pollution control, alternative clean energy technologies, and conservation. Because effectively addressing global warming is closely linked to the protection of our water resources, the Tribal-State Climate Change Forum may hold its meetings in conjunction with the biannual meetings being held under the Tribal-State water resources accord entered into on May 12, 2004. The Forum shall coordinate its efforts with and review the data and findings of other agencies and work groups in the state working on the problem of global warming.

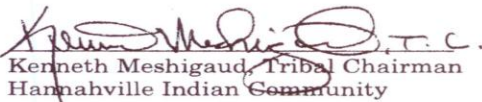


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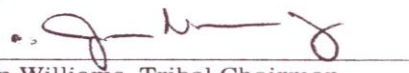

Jeffrey D. Parker, President
Bay Mills Indian Community


Derek J. Bailey, Tribal Chairman
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa &
Chippewa Indians


D. K. Sprague, Tribal Chairman
Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of
Pottawatomi Indians

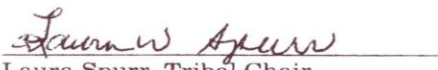

Kenneth Meshigaud, Tribal Chairman
Hannahville Indian Community


W. Chris Swartz, President
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community


Jim Williams, Tribal Chairman
Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake
Superior Chippewa

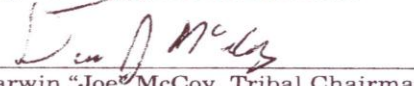

Larry Romanelli, Ogema
Little River Band of Ottawa Indians

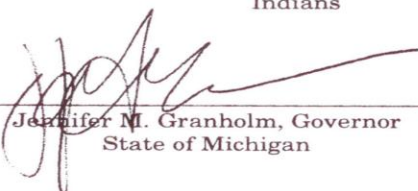

Frank Ettawageshik, Tribal Chairman
Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa
Indians


Laura Spurr, Tribal Chair
Nottawaseppi Huron Band of
Potawatomi Indians


John Miller, Tribal Chairman
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians


Fred Cantu, Tribal Chief
Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe


Darwin "Joe" McCoy, Tribal Chairman
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa
Indians


Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor
State of Michigan

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