



RESOLUTION # 2015-8

TITLE: Supporting Pocantico Call to Action on Climate Impacts and Cultural Heritage

WHEREAS, the National Native American Bar Association (“NNABA”) works to promote issues important to the Native American community and to improve professional opportunities for Native American lawyers, we do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, NNABA was founded in 1973 and serves as the national association for Native American attorneys, judges, law professors and law students, and NNABA strives to be a leader on social, cultural, political and legal issues affecting American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, American Indigenous Peoples have unique cultures, rights, lands, natural resources, sacred sites, and subsistence lifestyles impacted by changes in the climate, including sea level rise, ocean acidification, natural disasters, erosion, and flooding; and

WHEREAS, Articles 8-12 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes and respects that indigenous peoples have a right to their culture and the right not to be removed from their territories without free, prior and informed consent; and

WHEREAS, Articles 25-30 of Declaration recognizes and respects self-determination of indigenous peoples, in particular, the right to territories and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, American Indigenous Peoples have experienced disproportionate adverse impacts on culture, human and environmental health, traditional lifestyles, food systems, survival, and self-determination; and

WHEREAS, American Indigenous communities and indigenous cultural heritages are at risk as a result of increased climate impacts; among the most at-risk communities are the bayou Indian tribes in South Louisiana, Alaska Native villages, Native Hawaiians, and other coastal communities. For example, tribal lands have already been lost due to sea level rise, forcing the ultimate relocation of tribal members and resulting in the destruction of tribal sacred sites; and

WHEREAS, impacts on cultural heritage has not been comprehensively discussed in determining climate policy; and



WHEREAS, a convening at Pocantico in February 2015 discussed the need for the recognition of cultural heritage in climate policy discussions at all levels and issued a “Call to Action on Climate Impacts and Cultural Heritage”; and

WHEREAS, tribal voices, of both recognized and unrecognized tribes, need to be included in climate discussions in order to maintain and preserve the cultural heritage of tribal communities.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Native American Bar Association joins in the Call to Action on Climate Impacts and Cultural Heritage.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the National Native American Bar Association supports the inclusion of American Indigenous Peoples voices at all levels of climate policy discussions and urges all officials—local, state, federal, and international—(1) to take actions to reduce the impact of climate change on tribal communities and tribal cultural heritages, (2) take action to combat land loss and erosion impacting tribal communities; (3) include tribal communities in discussions regarding cultural heritage protection and loss of tribal lands; and (4) consult tribal communities on relocation issues.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the membership at the Annual Meeting of the National Native American Bar Association on April 18, 2015, with a quorum present.

Mary Smith

Mary Smith, President