



## United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

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### **Nashville, TN Office:**

711 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Suite 100  
Nashville, TN 37214  
Phone: (615) 872-7900  
Fax: (615) 872-7417

### **Washington, DC Office:**

400 North Capitol Street, Suite 585  
Washington, D.C., 20001  
Phone: (202) 624-3550  
Fax: (202) 393-5218

### **USET SPF Resolution No. 2016:024**

## **REQUEST FOR THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO AMEND THE RESTORE ACT TO PROVIDE FOR TRIBAL NATION REPRESENTATION ON GULF COAST ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION COUNCIL**

- WHEREAS,** USET Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-six (26) federally recognized Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET SPF Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribal Nation, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribal Nation's leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** on April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill began with the explosion and collapse of the BP operated Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig in the Gulf of Mexico, resulting in the tragic loss of eleven lives and injuries of seventeen workers, and became the largest accidental oil spill in the petroleum industry and one of the greatest ecological disasters in modern times; and
- WHEREAS,** in response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act), a United States federal statute, was signed into law by President Barack Obama on July 6, 2012; and
- WHEREAS,** the RESTORE Act dedicates 80 percent of all administrative and civil penalties related to the Deepwater Horizon spill to a Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund and outlines a structure by which the funds can be utilized to restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, coastal wetlands, and economy of the Gulf Coast region; and
- WHEREAS,** the RESTORE Act established the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council which has responsibilities with respect to 60 percent of the funds made available from a Gulf Restoration Trust Fund; and
- WHEREAS,** the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council is comprised of governors from the five affected Gulf States, the Secretaries from the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, and Homeland Security as well as the Secretary of the Army and the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; and
- WHEREAS,** the RESTORE Act did not include representation on the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council for those eleven federally recognized Coastal Tribal Nations whose Tribal and ancestral lands fall within the Council's declared area of impact from the BP oil spill; and

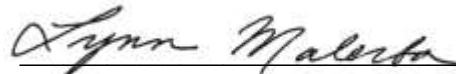
- WHEREAS,** nine of the eleven federally recognized Coastal Tribal Nations affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill are member Tribal Nations of USET; and
- WHEREAS,** the omission, in the RESTORE Act, of these coastal Tribal Nations from representation on the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, represents an egregious omission and lack of respect for Tribal sovereignty; and
- WHEREAS,** current funding opportunities through the RESTORE Act are largely state-centric in focus, creating an unnecessary burden upon those sovereign coastal Tribal Nations seeking to participate in RESTORE projects; and
- WHEREAS,** in December 2010, the United States recognized the rights of its First Peoples through its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), whose provisions and principles support and promote the purposes of this resolution; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors calls upon the United States Congress to amend the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act to include representation on the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council for those sovereign coastal Tribal Nations impacted by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

**CERTIFICATION**

This resolution was duly passed at the 2016 USET SPF Impact Week Meeting in Arlington, VA, at which a quorum was present, on February 11, 2016.



Brian Patterson, President  
USET Sovereignty Protection Fund



Chief Lynn Malerba, Secretary  
USET Sovereignty Protection Fund

*“Because there is strength in Unity”*