WHEREAS, United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-seven (27) 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 Nations’ leadership; and

WHEREAS, despite the invaluable contributions to the United States made by Tribal Nations, the continued survival of Tribal culture, and strength of Native people, public perception of Tribal Nations and Native peoples remains biased, inaccurate, and harmful to our progress; and

WHEREAS, because of these deeply held misperceptions, Native experiences and voices are largely invisible or fundamentally misrepresented in public discourse; and

WHEREAS, the USET SPF 2018 Annual Meeting began on a day that continues to be set aside by the United States where this country shamefully celebrates Christopher Columbus; a man whose legacy includes the destruction of Native peoples and cultures without regard or a sense of humanity; and,

WHEREAS, in June 2016, the Reclaiming Native Truth project was launched as a national effort to foster cultural, social, and policy change by empowering Native Americans to counter discrimination, invisibility, and the dominant narratives that limit Native opportunity, access to justice, health, and self-determination; and

WHEREAS, Reclaiming Native Truth’s goal is to move hearts and minds toward greater respect, inclusion and social justice for Native peoples; and

WHEREAS, between 2016 and 2018, Reclaiming Native Truth conducted an unprecedented research campaign designed to increase our understanding of the dominant narrative about Native peoples in the United States; and

WHEREAS, this comprehensive research was designed to uncover what different groups of Americans across socioeconomic, racial, geographic, gender, political ideology, and generational cohorts perceive, and what they don’t know, about Native Americans and Native issues, as well as to learn what types of messages will begin to shift public perception; and

WHEREAS, the project’s research methodologies included a combination of literature reviews, social listening, focus groups, online focus groups, national surveys, and in-depth interviews; and
WHEREAS, researchers found that deficits in education and limited personal experience with Native people and Tribal Nations contributed to a dominant national narrative that renders our history and contemporary life invisible or stereotyped; and

WHEREAS, the research also revealed opportunities to change this narrative through education and increased historical accuracy, as well as framing messages in hopeful tones that appeal to personal values; and

WHEREAS, this led to the development of a new narrative based in values, history, and visibility that resulted in significantly higher support for Native issues; and

WHEREAS, new narratives alone are not enough. They must connect with grassroots organizing, cross-sectoral partnerships with non-Native allies, and unity, not only within Tribal Nations but also among individual Natives and allies; and

WHEREAS, Reclaiming Native Truth has created messaging guides for use by both Indian Country Stakeholders and Reclaiming Native Truth Allies; 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 SPF Board of Directors strongly supports and concurs with the conclusions drawn by the research of the Reclaiming Native Truth project, noting this reflects our own experiences; and, be it further

RESOLVED the USET SPF Board of Directors will partner with Reclaiming Native Truth to disseminate and amplify the new narrative, and in future efforts designed to promote a positive, accurate portrayal of Native people and Tribal Nations in public discourse.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET SPF Annual Meeting held on the Sovereign Territory of the Seneca Nation of Indians, at which a quorum was present on October 11, 2018.

Chief Kirk E. Francis, Sr., President
United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund

Chief Lynn Malerba, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund

Because there is Strength in Unity