



USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

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USET SPF Resolution No. 2025 SPF:008

ADVOCATING FOR THE SUSTAINED AND PROACTIVE PROTECTION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is an intertribal organization comprised of thirty-three (33) 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,** the North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) is critically endangered, with an estimated population of fewer than 400 individuals remaining in the wild, making their survival at risk due to human activities, including entanglement in fishing gear, ship strikes, and habitat degradation; and
- WHEREAS,** the Passamaquoddy Tribe, along with other Indigenous people of the Northeastern United States and Eastern Canada, has a deep cultural, spiritual, and historical connection to marine life, including the North Atlantic right whale, and other whales which hold significant meaning in their traditions, songs, creation stories, and ecological knowledge; and
- WHEREAS,** the North Atlantic right whale is an integral part of the broader marine ecosystem and is considered a keystone species, whose health and preservation are directly linked to the sustainability of the oceanic environment and the well-being of Indigenous communities that rely on the health of these ecosystems for subsistence, culture, and spirituality; and
- WHEREAS,** the Passamaquoddy Tribe has the inherent responsibility and right to protect their cultural heritage and practices, which includes the protection of species such as the North Atlantic right whales and other whales central to their way of life; and
- WHEREAS,** the construction of offshore wind energy will increase the risk of vessel strikes by increasing vessel traffic to and from wind turbines placed in the migratory and feeding routes of the right whale, and along with the increase in vessel traffic to and from offshore wind energy sites the construction and operation of said sites cause noise pollution, ecosystem degradation, and interrupt migratory routes of all whales and other marine mammals; and
- WHEREAS,** climate change, overfishing, and commercial shipping traffic have significantly impacted the habitat and migration patterns of all whales including the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale, further endangering their survival, with immediate and long-term threats to their populations; and

- WHEREAS,** the protection and recovery of the North Atlantic right whale requires comprehensive, collaborative efforts involving Tribal, federal, state, and local stakeholders, including Indigenous Knowledge holders, conservationists, scientists, and government agencies to develop and implement sustainable and effective management strategies; and
- WHEREAS,** the United States has made commitments under various international agreements, including the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), to protect species like the North Atlantic right whale, and these commitments must be honored in a way that recognizes and respects the rights and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples in decision-making processes; 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,** that USET SPF calls for the immediate and sustained protection of the North Atlantic right whale and its habitat through the following federal actions:
1. **Stronger regulations** to prevent vessel collisions and entanglements of North Atlantic right whales, ensuring enforcement of existing protections under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act; and
 2. **Encouraging the creation of safe marine corridors** to minimize human-wildlife interactions, especially during migration and calving seasons, to safeguard the species' critical habitats; and
 3. **Supporting the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge** and Tribal participation in ongoing conservation efforts for the North Atlantic right whale, including scientific research, monitoring programs, and the development of mitigation strategies; and
 4. **Establishing co-management partnerships** between Tribal, federal, state, and local entities to collaboratively protect North Atlantic right whales and ensure the sustainability of marine ecosystems that hold cultural, ecological, and economic significance for Indigenous communities; and
 5. **Increased funding and resources** to assist the Passamaquoddy Tribe and other affected Tribal Nations in carrying out traditional ecological knowledge practices, as well as in participating in research and policy development aimed at conserving the North Atlantic right whale; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that USET SPF calls upon all relevant federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the broader public, to join in these efforts to protect the North Atlantic right whale, recognizing the species' importance to Indigenous peoples and the broader ecological health of the oceanic environment.

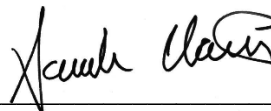
Because there is Strength in Unity

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET SPF Impact Week Meeting held in Arlington, VA at which a quorum was present on March 13, 2025.



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



Vice Chairwoman Sarah Harris, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund