



USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

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USET SPF Resolution No. 2026 SPF:002

SUPPORT FOR RECOGNITION OF TRIBAL NATIONS AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP

- 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 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement is currently being updated and does not currently include any federally recognized Tribal Nations as formal partners or provide signatory status, and, as such, does not fully integrate Indigenous values, knowledge, or governance expertise needed to achieve full ecosystem restoration and health of our ancestral lands and waters; and
- WHEREAS,** the leadership of all seven federally recognized Tribal Nations within the mid-Atlantic region signed a resolution on January 15, 2025 entitled, "***A Declaration of Tribal Nations as Sovereign Governments Committed to the Protection and Restoration of Ancestral Lands and Waters through the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership***" announcing their intent to formally join the Partnership as a Signatory under the Indigenous Conservation Council (ICC), fund Tribal capacity and revitalize Indigenous Knowledge, and calling on the Chesapeake Bay Program to honor and respect Indigenous Knowledge as equal to western science; and
- WHEREAS,** the resolution's signatory Tribal Nations were informed that a new directive would need to be signed by the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council at its annual meeting on December 2, 2025 to fully respond to the declaration; and
- WHEREAS,** the Indigenous Conservation Council, which includes representatives from each of the resolution's signatory Tribal Nations, has approved draft language for this new proposed directive at its September 19, 2025 Board meeting seeking to acknowledge and begin to address hundreds of years of unmet treaty promises and dispossession of Tribal homelands, including, but not limited to financial resources needed to return lands to the rightful stewardship, supporting co-management and co-stewardship, recognizing and honoring the importance of Indigenous Knowledge and practices, and enhancing Tribal capacity to support nation building; and
- WHEREAS,** the Chesapeake Bay Program's Principal Staff Committee released a draft Executive Charge that did not include any of the Tribal Nations' suggested language and has

proceeded without consultation around our request for full sovereignty and respect in the Program; 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

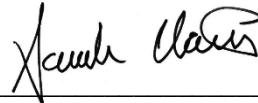
RESOLVED USET SPF supports the efforts of our mid-Atlantic Tribal Nation members by insisting that the Chesapeake Executive Council issue a new directive that honors Tribal Nations in the region as critical partners with signatory authority in the revised Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and reflects Tribal Nation input and guidance.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET SPF Annual Meeting at which a quorum was present on November 4, 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