



United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

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 Resolution No. 2012:030

OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 54 AND SENATE BILL 81 AMENDING THE ALABAMA UNDERWATER CULTURAL RESOURCES ACT OF 1999

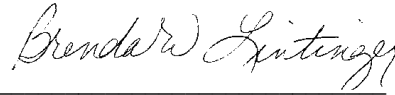
- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-six (26) federally recognized Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** House Bill 54 (HB54) and Senate Bill 81 (SB81) are special interest group-driven amendments to the Alabama Underwater Cultural Resources Act of 1999 (AUCRA) that will be devastating to Alabama historic sites such as Fort Morgan, Selma, Blakely, Africa Town, Cahawba and, Coosa, and to historic preservation in Alabama; and
- WHEREAS,** HB54 and SB81 will limit AUCRA by re-defining the phrase "cultural resources" to apply only to shipwrecks, thereby excluding all other underwater historical and cultural resources, including those derived by more than 14,000 years of inhabitation by American Indians and their ancestors, leaving them vulnerable to theft and destruction by artifact and relic collectors, sellers, and dive charter operators; and
- WHEREAS,** under AUCRA, currently, theft of historic artifacts, relics and treasures from Alabama's waters and underwater historic sites is a crime. HB54 and SB81 will amend the only Alabama laws dealing with the theft of underwater cultural artifacts and relics by legalizing these activities; and
- WHEREAS,** HB54 and SB81 will open all Alabama state waters, including those in state historic sites and parks, to the unlimited and unregulated mining and recovery of valuable historic artifacts, relics and treasures; and
- WHEREAS,** passage of HB54 and SB81 will not only be a direct detriment to the people of Alabama, but also sets a dangerous precedent for the destruction and irreplaceable loss of important underwater cultural resources located beneath State-owned waterways; and, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors opposes the passage of House Bill 54 and Senate Bill 81 within the Alabama State legislature, and the subsequent amendments that would occur to the Alabama Underwater Cultural Resources Act of 1999, which currently provides protection to underwater historical and cultural resources within the state waters of Alabama.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Impact Week Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Arlington, VA, on Thursday, February 16, 2012.



Brian Patterson, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Brenda Lintinger, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

“Because there is strength in Unity”