USET Resolution No. 2013:034

SUPPORT FOR USDA SMALL WATERSHED PROGRAM (PL-566)

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, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed Program (PL-566) is the federal program that funds small watershed restoration projects; and

WHEREAS, the Watershed Program is comprised of three elements, Watershed Surveys and Planning, Watershed Operations, and Watershed Rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, the Watershed Program has been the funding source for hundreds of important federal and local partnership projects across the country, including the Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project and a number of dam rehabilitation projects in Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, during contentious Congressional budget debates in the spring of 2011, Congress eliminated funding for the PL-566 Watershed Program, which placed many of these projects in jeopardy of not being able to fulfill their partnership obligations with local sponsors; and

WHEREAS, Congressman William Keating of Massachusetts has pledged his support for the PL-566 program and by agreeing to introduce an amendment to an appropriations bill or the pending Farm Bill that would restore PL-566 funding; and

WHEREAS, there are 13 small watershed projects which affect USET member Tribes in Alabama, Connecticut, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and South Carolina; 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 supports the efforts of Congressman Keating to restore Watershed Program PL-566 funding and requests that Congress move forward in restoring these funds which will benefit USET member Tribes and all people living within and adjacent to these watershed projects; and, be it further
RESOLVED  the USET Board of Directors encourages its member Tribes to contact their members of Congress requesting support for Congressman Keating’s amendment and to support the restoration of funding for Watershed Program PL-566.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Semi-Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Niagara Falls, NY, on Friday, May 17, 2013.

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

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

“Because there is strength in Unity”