



United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

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USET SPF Resolution No. 2016:023

REQUEST FOR FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO REJECT SENATE BILL 1054 AND HOUSE BILL 803

- WHEREAS,** USET Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-six (26) 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 Nation's leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** the cultural heritage of Tribal Nations represented by USET is manifest in the landscape of the ancestral, aboriginal, and ceded lands which they once occupied and still occupy; and
- WHEREAS,** this cultural heritage is fundamentally important to the core identity of Native people, as it connects us directly with our ancestors; and
- WHEREAS,** cultural heritage includes the artifacts and remains that our ancestors left behind which today comprise archaeological sites; and
- WHEREAS,** archaeological sites are places of special importance to Tribal Nations represented by USET and, wherever possible, should be protected from disturbance; and
- WHEREAS,** state governments have a moral and legal duty to Tribal Nations to protect both currently known and unknown archaeological sites located on lands within their jurisdiction; and
- WHEREAS,** the 2016 Florida Legislative session is considering two identical bills known as Senate Bill 1054 and House Bill 803 'Historic and Archaeological Artifacts', which, if enacted, would allow private citizens to obtain a permit, by application and payment of a fee, to excavate and collect artifacts from submerged state lands in Florida; and
- WHEREAS,** artifacts resultant from such permitted activities would be retained by the collector with the possibility that they could be sold to other private collectors; and
- WHEREAS,** the passing of the proposed bills represents a direct threat to the cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples of Florida through the unwarranted disturbance of our cultural heritage and has a high likelihood of disturbing ancestral burial sites; 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

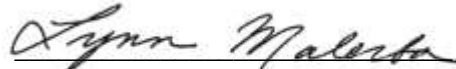
RESOLVED the USET Board of Directors calls upon the Florida Legislature to act now to stop the passage of Senate Bill 1054 and House Bill 803 for the benefit of all Tribal citizens in Florida.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the 2016 USET SPF Impact Week Meeting in Arlington, VA, at which a quorum was present, on February 11, 2016.



Brian Patterson, President
USET Sovereignty Protection Fund



Chief Lynn Malerba, Secretary
USET Sovereignty Protection Fund

“Because there is strength in Unity”