



**TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE**  
**Executive Board of Directors**  
**Resolution No. 2021 - 11**

**PROTECTING THE KOYUKUK RIVER REGION FROM THE HARMFUL IMPACTS OF  
THE AMBLER ROAD PROJECT AND ASSOCIATED MINING ACTIVITIES**

**WHEREAS**, Since time immemorial, Alaska Native people in the Koyukuk River region of Interior Alaska, and we have depended on healthy land, healthy water, and healthy fish and wildlife resources to maintain our way of life;

**WHEREAS**, Alaska Native tribal governments have been successful stewards of our resources for thousands of years, our relationship with our homelands and everything contained therein, including wildlife, fish, birds, rivers, streams, forests, tundra, wetlands, water, and air, and the interdependent ecosystems that these natural elements together form the basis of our cultures, spirituality, sciences and social structure; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska Native tribal governments and people have an inherent and fundamental human right to continue our hunting and fishing practices and to maintain our traditional indigenous way of life; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska Native tribal governments and people hold sacred our traditional cultural landscapes, archaeological sites, artifacts, grave sites, and other places and resources that are integral to maintaining our spiritual and cultural well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, Our elders, tribal leaders and cultural bearers have taught us to think beyond the present and measure the effects into the future, and we have trust responsibility toward the generations that will follow us; and

**WHEREAS**, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is the non-profit tribal consortium representing 41 tribal entities including the 37 federally recognized Tribes of Interior Alaska, providing services to 15,000 Alaska Natives across 235,000 square miles; and

**WHEREAS**, The objectives and duties of TCC identified in its Strategic Plan include improving the quality of life for Tribal members, providing essential health and social services in Alaska Native communities, advocating on behalf of Tribes, promoting Alaska

Native culture and traditional values, and preserving the indigenous way of life for future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, TCC is committed to strong leadership and communication with its member Tribes and to advocating on their behalf in connection with federal and State consultations, including those concerning land use planning and proposed projects that may affect traditional homeland use areas, sacred sites, and the indigenous way of life; and

**WHEREAS**, The Ambler Road Project is a proposed 211-mile industrial access road intended to facilitate the development of a hard-rock mining district, including at least four large-scale mines and potentially hundreds of smaller mines sprawling out from the road across the region; and

**WHEREAS**, The Ambler Road Project would cross 11 major river systems and thousands of smaller rivers, streams, and wetlands, thus requiring about 48 bridges and nearly 3,000 culverts, and this would result in the permanent destruction of thousands of acres of wetlands and alter hydrology and vegetation throughout the region; and

**WHEREAS**, Truck traffic, habitat fragmentation, noise, toxic dust, and vegetation loss resulting from the Ambler Road Project and associated mining activities are expected to harm the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and divert its migration path; and

**WHEREAS**, Dewatering of streams and toxic pollution from mining in the region enabled by the Ambler Road Project are expected to cause severe impacts to spawning areas for sheefish, whitefish, and salmon; and

**WHEREAS**, It is well-established that the introduction of extractive industries into Native communities results in social and cultural disruption; food insecurity; degradation of public health; increased rates of sexual violence, addiction, and disease; spiritual and psychological trauma; and other negative impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, The Ambler Road Project and associated mining activities pose a grave threat to the fundamental human rights of Alaska Native people throughout the region, who wish to maintain their traditional subsistence-based culture and way of life and pass it on to future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, Several of TCC's member Tribes have participated as consulting parties and cooperating agencies in federal agency decision-making processes relating to the Ambler Road Project and associated mining activities, and many individual Tribal

members and Tribal Council representatives have testified and submitted comments expressing concerns about the threats posed by the project and the importance of preserving their indigenous way of life for future generations; and

**WHEREAS,** The federal agency review processes and ongoing Tribal consultations relating to the impacts of the Ambler Road Project and associated mining activities on subsistence, cultural resources, and the environment have been woefully inadequate and unlawful with the federal agencies failing to follow federal statutes and executive orders; and

**WHEREAS,** The TCC Full Board of Directors has reviewed the recent federal agency decisions approving the Ambler Road Project, and these decisions and related materials do not reflect the magnitude of the fundamental human rights and Tribal interests at stake, do not disclose the true threats posed by the Ambler Road Project and associated mining activities, and will not protect the indigenous way of life from severe and irreversible harm; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the TCC Executive Board of Directors opposes the proposed Ambler Road Project, and directs staff, and urges partners to continue their work in protecting the Koyukuk River region and surrounding areas from the harmful impacts of the Ambler Road Project and associated mining activities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the TCC Executive Board of Directors calls upon federal and State agencies to engage in robust, meaningful, and well-informed consultation with sovereign Tribal governments on a government-to-government basis and to show respect and deference to our traditional knowledge and expertise concerning our traditional hunting and fishing-based way of life as well as our sacred sites and cultural resources.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this resolution was duly passed by the Tanana Chiefs Conference Executive Board of Directors on 8/6, 2021 at Fairbanks, Alaska and a quorum was duly established.



  
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Robert Wright, Sr., Secretary/Treasurer

