

Congressman Don Young – Statement on H.R. 1619, the Catawba Indian Nation Lands Act

- Mr. Chairman, I support this bill because it is the right thing to do.
- H.R. 1619 provides the Catawba Nation with the same opportunity nearly every other federally recognized tribe located in the Lower 48 states has – the ability to provide for its members through economic development.
- In 1993, when Congress passed the original Catawba Land Claims Settlement Act, members of this Committee believed that both the state of South Carolina and the Catawba Tribe would benefit from the passage of the legislation.
- While those residing on the lands that were illegally taken from the Catawba 150 years earlier were made whole, the ability of the Tribe to pursue development ventures in support of the Tribe's economy were never realized.
- In fact, partially because of the limitations on tribal economic development, the Tribe has resorted to selling some of their lands to pay a debt resulting from their efforts to educate their children, who live on the reservation, at a nearby school district.
- This bill affirms the decision to take land into trust for the Catawba Nation, a decision based upon a process that began in 2013 during the Obama Administration and was completed in 2020 during the Trump Administration.
- These lands, located within the Tribe's six county service area in North Carolina, followed a process Congress fully expected would occur when we passed the 1993 Settlement Act – it just took too long.
- Mr. Chairman, I support this bill and I would ask that my colleagues do as well.