

Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs
Legislative Hearing on 6 Bills

June 7, 2023

Opening Statement

Today the subcommittee is meeting today to consider six bills.

H.R. 630, the Urban Indian Health Confer Act, would require all agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, or H-H-S, to establish an Urban Indian Organization, or U-I-O, confer policy.

Currently, only the Indian Health Service is required to confer with U-I-Os, while other agencies of H-H-S only are required to consult with tribes.

Second, H.R. 1240, the Winnebago Land Transfer Act of 2023, would provide for an administrative transfer of jurisdiction of approximately 1,600 acres of land in Iowa on the Nebraskan border from the Army Corps of Engineers to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be held in trust for the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

This would return land to the tribe that was seized by Army Corps of Engineers in the 1970s for a recreation project that was never completed.

Third, H.R. 1722, the Grand Ronde Reservation Act Amendment of 2023, would amend the Grand Ronde Reservation Act to reflect that the Grand Ronde tribe's extinguishment of land claims against the United States only applies to an 84-acre parcel of land, known as the Thompson Strip.

The bill also includes a gaming prohibition on any future land that the tribe may be awarded as part of a land claims settlement and prohibits the use of money received as part of a land claim settlement to purchase land for gaming purposes.

Fourth, H.R. 2461, the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribal Homelands Act, would establish an approximate 5,400-acre reservation for the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe from lands that are currently a part of the Navajo Nation's reservation in Arizona.

The San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe has historically lived in southern Utah and northern Arizona, and shared lands with the Navajo Nation, the Hopi tribe, and other tribes that lived and transverse the area. However, their traditional homelands were added to the Navajo reservation in 1922 and 1934. The San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe have continued to live on their traditional homelands since then, and they are the only federally recognized tribe in Arizona to not have a land base.

After litigation was instigated regarding land between the tribes, in 2000 both the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe and Navajo Nation signed a treaty that resolved this land issue, designating land for a reservation for the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, clarifying the sovereign authority of both tribes, and resolving other mutual concerns.

Fifth, H.R. 2839, would amend the Siletz Reservation Act to allow the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and the State of Oregon mutually agree to amend or replace the current consent decree governing the tribe's hunting, fishing, trapping, and animal gathering rights.

The Siletz tribe is one of the Oregon tribes that has a judicially mandated consent decree governing their hunting and fishing rights for their traditional areas, unlike other treaty tribes. This legislation would allow

for a process by which the state of Oregon and the Siletz to negotiate and amend or replace the current agreement.

Last on our agenda, H.R. 3371, the Wounded Knee Memorial and Sacred Site Act, would place approximately 40-acres of fee land within the Pine Ridge reservation into restricted fee status jointly for the Oglala Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. The land would be held in memorial as a sacred site for the Indian people killed in the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre.

I'm hopeful we can all work together to continue to ensure the legislation considered today gains support and moves through the legislative process.

I thank the witnesses for being here today.