

**Statement for the Record
Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior
House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs
Legislative Hearing On**

**H.R. 4276, To amend the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act to authorize grants to Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations, and for other purposes; H.R. 5515, Indian Trust Asset Reform Amendment Act; H.R. 5682, To take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Pechanga Band of Indians, and for other purposes; and H.R. 5696, STREAMLINE Act
November 19, 2025**

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide this statement for the record on H.R. 4276, To amend the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act to authorize grants to Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations, and for other purposes; H.R. 5515, Indian Trust Asset Reform Amendment Act; H.R. 5682, To take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Pechanga Band of Indians, and for other purposes; and H.R. 5696, Strengthening Tribal Real Estate Authority and Modernizing Land for Indigenous Nation Expansion Act (STREAMLINE Act).

H.R. 4276, To amend the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act to authorize grants to Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations, and for other purposes

The Department supports H.R. 4276, which builds upon the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act of 2016 (NATIVE Act) by reaffirming the federal government's commitment to empowering Native communities through tourism development. H.R. 4276 would authorize grants to Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations, enabling them to develop, promote, and sustain culturally authentic tourism initiatives.

Tourism is a powerful driver of economic development in Indian Country. It creates jobs, supports small businesses, and provides a platform for Native communities to share their stories, traditions, and cultural heritage with the world. According to the U.S. Travel Association, Native American tourism contributes billions annually to the national economy, yet many tribal communities still face barriers to accessing the resources needed to fully participate in this sector.

The NATIVE Act has helped address these disparities by encouraging interagency coordination and supporting tribal capacity building. H.R. 4276 would help ensure that these efforts continue and grow. For efficiency in implementation and consistency with the administration of other NATIVE Act grants, the Department recommends that the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs rather than the BIA be authorized to provide the grant program for Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

H.R. 5515, Indian Trust Asset Reform Amendment Act

H.R. 5515 builds upon the foundation of the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act of 2016 (ITARA), which was a significant step forward in promoting tribal sovereignty and self-determination in the management of certain trust assets, by amending ITARA to strengthen the framework for tribes.

ITARA authorized a demonstration project allowing eligible tribes to develop their own trust asset management plans and submit them to the Secretary. H.R. 5515 would potentially broaden participation by addressing eligibility definitions and administrative burdens, promoting local decision-making, and empowering tribes to manage their lands in ways that reflect their values, priorities, and economic goals.

The Department supports the intent of H.R. 5515. We are committed to working with tribal governments and organizations to ensure that ITARA meets tribal needs. We also recognize the importance of providing technical assistance and capacity-building resources to ensure that interested tribes can participate, regardless of size or location. The BIA is ready to work with the sponsor and the Subcommittee to assist in achieving the bill's intent and to provide any technical assistance to ensure effective implementation.

H.R. 5682, To take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Pechanga Band of Indians, and for other purposes

H.R. 5682 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer approximately 1,261 acres of Bureau of Land Management lands in Riverside County, California, and place those lands into trust for the benefit of the Pechanga Band of Indians. The bill would also prohibit gaming activities on the land.

The Pechanga Band of Indians has long sought to protect and preserve lands of cultural, historical, and environmental significance adjacent to their existing reservation. These lands include sacred sites, wildlife corridors, and open space that are integral to the Tribe's identity and traditional practices. The Department acknowledges the importance of these lands in advancing tribal sovereignty, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship.

The Department notes the Tribe's engagement with local stakeholders and its stated intentions to preserve the land for future generations. The Department recognizes the intent of H.R. 5682 as consistent with our trust responsibilities and the federal policy of promoting tribal self-determination. The BIA looks forward to working with the sponsor and the Subcommittee to ensure effective implementation of the legislation.

H.R. 5696, Strengthening Tribal Real Estate Authority and Modernizing Land for Indigenous Nation Expansion Act

H.R. 5696 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to utilize appraisals submitted by Indian tribes with Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) contract or

compact realty functions for the purpose of trust acquisitions for land consolidation. The bill aligns closely with the Department's broader land management modernization initiatives and advances the goals of enhancing tribal self-governance and economic independence. The BIA supports the legislation.

The BIA understands the intent of the legislation to minimize any administrative delays that may result from waiting for a federally approved appraisal for land located within the boundaries of a reservation or contiguous to Indian trust land, however, BIA's regulations at 25 C.F.R. Part 151 do not require an appraisal for the Secretary to acquire on-reservation land into trust. Amendments to these regulations as directed by the bill are, therefore, unlikely to address any administrative delays.

Appraisals are sometimes utilized under the regulations at 25 C.F.R. Part 152 when land is conveyed out of trust or for land consolidation purposes under the Indian Land Consolidation Act. These regulations do not prohibit the Secretary from utilizing an appraisal conducted by a tribe with an ISDEAA realty contract or compact that includes this function. As such, the BIA believes that an amendment to the Bureau handbooks could achieve the goals of the legislation without the need for regulatory amendments that would further delay implementation of H.R. 5696. The BIA is ready to work with the sponsor and the Subcommittee to assist in achieving the bill's intent and to provide any technical assistance to ensure effective implementation.