HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To:	Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs Republican Members
From:	Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs Staff: Kirstin Liddell (Kirstin.Liddell@mail.house.gov), Haig Kadian (Haig.Kadian@mail.house.gov), and Seneca Feys (Seneca.Feys@mail.house.gov); x6-9725
Date:	Monday, September 14, 2026
Subject:	Legislative Hearing on 2 Bills

The Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs will hold a legislative hearing on two bills: H.R. 7269 (Rep. Randall), *"Helping Our People Act of 2026"*; and H.R. 8674 (Rep. Begich), *"Geese House Site Conveyance Act"*.

The hearing will take place on **Thursday, September 17, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building**.

Member offices are requested to notify Seneca Feys (Seneca.Feys@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

I. KEY MESSAGES

- Representative Nick Begich's H.R. 8674 ensures that the culturally significant Geese House site will be managed by the region's native Athabascan people.
- H.R. 8674 conveys approximately 21,578 acres in the preserve area of Denali National Park and Preserve to Doyon, Limited, an Alaska Native Corporation.
- Doyon originally requested the transfer of the site in 1978, but the federal government never completed it. The bill promotes Alaska Natives' stewardship of culturally significant land and fulfills land-conveyance obligations under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

II. WITNESSES

Panel I (Members of Congress):
- ***To Be Announced***

Panel II (Outside Experts):
- **Ms. Sarah Obed,** Senior Vice President of External Affairs, Doyon, Limited, Anchorage, AK *[H.R. 8674]*
- **The Hon. Annette Bryan,** Councilwoman, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Tacoma, WA *[H.R. 7269] (Minority Witness)*

III. BACKGROUND

H.R. 7269 (Rep. Randall), *"Helping Our People Act of 2026"*

H.R. 7269 amends the Puyallup Tribe of Indians Settlement Act of 1989 to allow the Puyallup Tribe of Indians to assume management of its Settlement Trust Fund,[1] pursuant to the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994.[2]

The Puyallup Tribe of Indians is a federally recognized tribe located in Pierce County, Washington. In 1854, the Puyallup Reservation was established by the Medicine Creek Treaty on 1,280 acres.[3] Two years later, an additional 18,062 acres were added to the reservation. However, in 1890, due to the expansion of nearby Tacoma, Washington, tracts of land within the reservation were sold to non-Indian parties.[4] Ultimately, more than 9,000 acres of tribal land were sold to the buyers unaffiliated with the tribe.[5]

In *Puyallup Tribe v. Port of Tacoma*,[6] the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit confirmed the tribe's title to land within the Port of Tacoma, the bed of the Puyallup River, and adjacent exposed lands. This ruling gave rise to the Puyallup Tribe of Indians Settlement Act of 1989[7], which represented a historic agreement between the tribe, the City of Tacoma, the Port of Tacoma, the State of Washington, and the federal government.

The Puyallup Tribe of Indians Settlement Act of 1989[8] resolved long-standing land and jurisdictional disputes between the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and non-Indian parties by restoring 1,000 acres of land to the tribe.[9] The law also established a Permanent Trust fund for the purpose of supporting essential social services for tribal members.[10]

Currently, a Board of Trustees is responsible for administering the Trust. However, due to the Board's high operational costs, most of the income generated from the Trust goes to operations of the Board, instead of directly supporting the social services for tribal members.

While the tribe has the resources, experience, and training to execute the role of the Board, they do not have the authority to do so under the current framework. This imposes a duplicative and unnecessary burden on the Trust and negatively impacts the tribe.

H.R. 7269 amends the Puyallup Tribe of Indians Settlement Act of 1989 to allow the Puyallup tribe to assume management control over the Trust under a plan approved by the Secretary of the

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[1] Pub. L. No. 101–41.
[2] Pub. L. No. 103–412.
[3] Veronica E. Velarde Tiller, TILLER'S GUIDE TO INDIAN COUNTRY: ECONOMIC PROFILES OF AMERICAN INDIAN RESERVATIONS, (3rd ed. 2006), pg. 758.
[4] *Id.*
[5] *Id.*
[6] 717 F.2d 1251 (9th Cir. 1983), https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/717/1251/74683/.
[7] Pub. L. No. 101–41
[8] *Id.*
[9] *Id.*
[10] *Id.*

Interior. This change reflects current practices in federal trust law and is consistent with the Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act.

H.R. 8674 (Rep. Begich), *"Geese House Site Conveyance Act"*

H.R. 8674, introduced by Representative Nick Begich (R-AK-At Large), directs the Secretary of the Interior to convey approximately 21,578 acres of land within Denali National Park and Preserve to Doyon, Limited (Doyon), an Alaska Native Corporation (ANC).[11]

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)[12] was enacted to settle all aboriginal Alaskan land claims.[13] Under ANCSA, ANCs were created to receive the land distributed from the settlements and disperse the payments to Alaskan Natives.[14] Doyon selected the lands encompassing the Geese House site in 1978, but the lands were never conveyed.[15]

The Geese House site is a natural geologic feature resembling a grotto, known as "Geese House," which is of sacred, cultural and historical significance to Alaska Natives in the Doyon region.[16] Under H.R. 8674, Doyon would assume stewardship of Geese House and other culturally significant lands in the conveyed area, with exclusions for lakebed areas and specific delineated lots.[17]

H.R. 8674 directs the Secretary of the Interior to complete unfulfilled ANCSA commitments by conveying the 21,578 acres that Doyon has selected.[18] Doyon has prioritized consolidating culturally significant and ancestral lands, but current ownership of the lands in the Denali National Park and Preserve complicates that goal.[19] The legislation requires the Secretary of the Interior to reserve public easements on the conveyed lands that retain public access routes for travel and subsistence use.[20] Mining or mineral activities, development or any use that would derogate the cultural value or significance of the Geese House, or the transfer of land to any non-federal person or entity are prohibited by the legislation.

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[11] H.R. 8674, 119th Congress, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/8674/text.
[12] Pub. L. No. 92–203.
[13] *Id.*
[14] *Id.*
[15] "Seeking Conveyance of Historic Geese House Site," Doyon, Limited, April 28, 2026, https://www.doyon.com/seeking-conveyance-of-historic-geese-house-site/.
[16] "Seeking Conveyance of Historic Geese House Site," Doyon, Limited, April 28, 2026, https://www.doyon.com/seeking-conveyance-of-historic-geese-house-site/; "In Search of a Legend," Doyon, Limited, June 24, 2021, https://www.doyon.com/in-search-of-a-legend/.
[17] Testimony of Mr. Charles Cuvelier, National Park Service, before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, 119th Congress Legislative Hearing on July 21, 2026, https://www.energy.senate.gov/services/files/A369C011-8F52-4B6C-BD91-3536CF4ECA89.
[18] Testimony of Mr. Charles Cuvelier, National Park Service, before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, 119th Congress Legislative Hearing on July 21, 2026, https://www.energy.senate.gov/services/files/A369C011-8F52-4B6C-BD91-3536CF4ECA89.
[19] *Id.*
[20] H.R. 8674, 119th Congress, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/8674/text.

IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & SECTION-BY-SECTION

H.R. 7269 (Rep. Randall), *"Helping Our People Act of 2026"*

Sec 2. Withdrawal of Trust Fund by Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

- Amends the Puyallup Tribe of Indians Settlement Act of 1989 to authorize the Puyallup Tribe of Indians to withdraw funds from its trust, pursuant to the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994.
- Requires the withdrawal plan to first be approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

H.R. 8674 (Rep. Begich), *"Geese House Site Conveyance Act"*

Sec 2. Geese House Conveyance.

- Conveys approximately 21,578 acres in the preserve area of Denali National Park and Preserve to Doyon.
- Retains public easements on the conveyed lands for public access travel routes and local subsistence use.
- Prohibits mining, mineral activities, and development or any use that would derogate the cultural value or significance of the Geese House on the lands, as well as the transfer of any of the conveyed lands to a non-federal person or entity.
- Stipulates that the adjustment of Denali National Park and Preserve boundaries and acreage total are to be made by the Secretary of the Interior after the lands are conveyed.

V. CBO COST ESTIMATE

A formal cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is not yet available for these bills.

VI. ADMINISTRATION POSITION

In a July 21, 2026, hearing held by the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the U.S. Department of the Interior testified in support of S. 4399, identical companion legislation to H.R. 8674.[21]

The Trump administration's position on H.R. 7269 is unknown at this time.

VII. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)

H.R. 7269

[21] Testimony of Mr. Charles Cuvelier, National Park Service, before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, 119th Congress Legislative Hearing on July 21, 2026, https://www.energy.senate.gov/services/files/A369C011-8F52-4B6C-BD91-3536CF4ECA89.