

SCIP Legislative Hearing on H.R. 4715, H.R. 5715, and H.R. 6707

3.31.22

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you for your kind comments remembering our former colleague and subcommittee ranking member, Congressman Don Young.

We are all deeply saddened by his passing.

Mr. Young had a larger-than-life personality and his tenacity for advancing good policy for his constituents is something that we can all learn from and strive towards.

Mr. Young served for nearly 50 years in the U.S. Congress and made improving the lives of Alaska Natives and Native Americans a top priority.

He will be deeply missed by us all and I offer my deepest condolences to his family.

Madam Chair, you have called today's hearing to take testimony on three pieces of legislation.

The first bill, H.R. 4715, would authorize \$137.5 million to be appropriated to the Secretary of the Interior to pay Quapaw Nation tribal member claimants in accordance with the 2020 recommendation of the Review Panel of the United States Court of Federal Claims.

In 2012, the House passed a resolution directing the United States Court of Federal Claims to review whether 65 members of the Quapaw tribe had trust-related legal or equitable claims against the United States.

The second bill on our agenda, H.R. 5715, would reauthorize the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation Act through 2029 and would authorize the Foundation to use up to \$5,000 for official reception and representation expenses.

Since 1992, the Udall Foundation has worked to strengthen the appreciation and stewardship of the environment, public lands, and natural resources and strengthen native nations to facilitate their self-determination, governance, and human capital goals.

The last bill on our agenda, H.R. 6707, would make several amendments to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980.

The Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act extinguished legal claims of the tribe's historic lands in Maine.

In addition, Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act ratified the state-level Maine Implementing Act, which extended state civil and criminal jurisdiction over the tribes in the state of Maine.

H.R. 6707 would extend the applicability of federal laws for the benefit of Indians, after the date enactment to the four federally recognized tribes in the state of Maine.

The bill also provides that two tribes may exercise exclusive jurisdiction over Indian child welfare proceedings.

Finally, the bill strikes a provision in current law that currently provides that federal laws passed for the benefit of Indian country after the original enactment date of Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act passed will not apply in Maine unless such law is made specifically applicable within Maine.

While the intent of H.R. 6707 is to extend future federal law applicability to the tribes in Maine, it is critically important that the Committee work with the State of Maine on any amendments to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act.

I would like to acknowledge concerns that this legislation would provide for a preemption of Maine state jurisdictional law.

This would change in whole, or part forty years of a civil and criminal jurisdictional framework and believe it is critically important we receive the views of the state.

I thank our witnesses for joining us and look forward to hearing their testimony.

Madam Chair, before you introduce the member panel, I would like to ask Unanimous Consent to enter into the record a statement from Representative Mullin on his bill, H.R. 4715.

Thank you,

I yield back.