S. 1973 Public law 104-301

One Hundred Fourth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Wednesday, the third day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-six

An Act

To provide for the settlement of the Navajo-Hopi land dispute, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute Settlement Act of 1996".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) it is in the public interest for the Tribe, Navajos residing on the Hopi Partitioned Lands, and the United States to reach a peaceful resolution of the longstanding disagreements between the parties under the Act commonly known as the "Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act of 1974" (Public Law 93–531; 25 U.S.C. 640d et seq.);

(2) it is in the best interest of the Tribe and the United States that there be a fair and final settlement of certain issues remaining in connection with the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act of 1974, including the full and final settlement of the multiple claims that the Tribe has against the United States;

(3) this Act, together with the Settlement Agreement executed on December 14, 1995, and the Accommodation Agreement (as incorporated by the Settlement Agreement), provide the authority for the Tribe to enter agreements with eligible Navajo families in order for those families to remain residents of the Hopi Partitioned Lands for a period of 75 years, subject to the terms and conditions of the Accommodation Agreement;

(4) the United States acknowledges and respects—

(A) the sincerity of the traditional beliefs of the members of the Tribe and the Navajo families residing on the Hopi Partitioned Lands; and

(B) the importance that the respective traditional beliefs of the members of the Tribe and Navajo families have with respect to the culture and way of life of those members and families;

(5) this Act, the Settlement Agreement, and the Accommodation Agreement provide for the mutual respect and protection of the traditional religious beliefs and practices of the Tribe and the Navajo families residing on the Hopi Partitioned Lands;

(6) the Tribe is encouraged to work with the Navajo families residing on the Hopi Partitioned Lands to address their concerns regarding the establishment of family or individual burial

plots for deceased family members who have resided on the Hopi Partitioned Lands; and

(7) neither the Navajo Nation nor the Navajo families residing upon Hopi Partitioned Lands were parties to or signers of the Settlement Agreement between the United States and the Hopi Tribe.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

Except as otherwise provided in this Act, for purposes of this Act, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) ACCOMMODATION.—The term "Accommodation" has the meaning provided that term under the Settlement Agreement.

(2) HOPI PARTITIONED LANDS.—The term "Hopi Partitioned Lands" means lands located in the Hopi Partitioned Area, as defined in section 168.1(g) of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act).

(3) NAVAJO PARTITIONED LANDS.—The term "Navajo Partitioned Lands" has the meaning provided that term in the proposed regulations issued on November 1, 1995, at 60 Fed. Reg. 55506.

(4) NEW LANDS.—The term "New Lands" has the meaning provided that term in section 700.701(b) of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations.

(5) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(6) SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.—The term "Settlement Agreement" means the agreement between the United States and the Hopi Tribe executed on December 14, 1995.

(7) TRIBE.—The term "Tribe" means the Hopi Tribe.

(8) NEWLY ACQUIRED TRUST LANDS.—The term "newly acquired trust lands" means lands taken into trust for the Tribe within the State of Arizona pursuant to this Act or the Settlement Agreement.

SEC. 4. RATIFICATION OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.

The United States approves, ratifies, and confirms the Settlement Agreement.

SEC. 5. CONDITIONS FOR LANDS TAKEN INTO TRUST.

The Secretary shall take such action as may be necessary to ensure that the following conditions are met prior to taking lands into trust for the benefit of the Tribe pursuant to the Settlement Agreement:

(1) SELECTION OF LANDS TAKEN INTO TRUST.—

(A) PRIMARY AREA.—In accordance with section 7(a) of the Settlement Agreement, the primary area within which lands acquired by the Tribe may be taken into trust by the Secretary for the benefit of the Tribe under the Settlement Agreement shall be located in northern Arizona.

(B) REQUIREMENTS FOR LANDS TAKEN INTO TRUST IN THE PRIMARY AREA.—Lands taken into trust in the primary area referred to in subparagraph (A) shall be—

(i) land that is used substantially for ranching, agriculture, or another similar use; and

(ii) to the extent feasible, in contiguous parcels.

(2) ACQUISITION OF LANDS.—Before taking any land into trust for the benefit of the Tribe under this section, the Secretary shall ensure that—

(A) at least 85 percent of the eligible Navajo heads of household (as determined under the Settlement Agreement) have entered into an accommodation or have chosen to relocate and are eligible for relocation assistance (as determined under the Settlement Agreement); and

(B) the Tribe has consulted with the State of Arizona concerning the lands proposed to be placed in trust, including consulting with the State concerning the impact of placing those lands into trust on the State and political subdivisions thereof resulting from the removal of land from the tax rolls in a manner consistent with the provisions of part 151 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations.

(3) PROHIBITION.—The Secretary may not, pursuant to the provisions of this Act and the Settlement Agreement, place lands, any portion of which are located within or contiguous to a 5-mile radius of an incorporated town or city (as those terms are defined by the Secretary) in northern Arizona, into trust for benefit of the Tribe without specific statutory authority.

(4) EXPEDITIOUS ACTION BY THE SECRETARY.—Consistent with all other provisions of this Act, the Secretary is directed to take lands into trust under this Act expeditiously and without undue delay.

SEC. 6. ACQUISITION THROUGH CONDEMNATION OF CERTAIN INTERSPERSED LANDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) ACTION BY THE SECRETARY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall take action as specified in subparagraph (B), to the extent that the Tribe, in accordance with section 7(b) of the Settlement Agreement—

(i) acquires private lands; and

(ii) requests the Secretary to acquire through condemnation interspersed lands that are owned by the State of Arizona and are located within the exterior boundaries of those private lands in order to have both the private lands and the State lands taken into trust by the Secretary for the benefit of the Tribe.

(B) ACQUISITION THROUGH CONDEMNATION.—With respect to a request for an acquisition of lands through condemnation made under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall, upon the recommendation of the Tribe, take such action as may be necessary to acquire the lands through condemnation and, with funds provided by the Tribe, pay the State of Arizona fair market value for those lands in accordance with applicable Federal law, if the conditions described in paragraph (2) are met.

(2) CONDITIONS FOR ACQUISITION THROUGH CONDEMNATION.—The Secretary may acquire lands through condemnation under this subsection if—

(A) that acquisition is consistent with the purpose of obtaining not more than 500,000 acres of land to be taken into trust for the Tribe;

(B) the State of Arizona concurs with the United States that the acquisition is consistent with the interests of the State; and

(C) the Tribe pays for the land acquired through condemnation under this subsection.

(b) DISPOSITION OF LANDS.—If the Secretary acquires lands through condemnation under subsection (a), the Secretary shall take those lands into trust for the Tribe in accordance with this Act and the Settlement Agreement.

(c) PRIVATE LANDS.—The Secretary may not acquire private lands through condemnation for the purpose specified in subsection (a)(2)(A).

SEC. 7. ACTION TO QUIET POSSESSION.

If the United States fails to discharge the obligations specified in section 9(c) of the Settlement Agreement with respect to voluntary relocation of Navajos residing on Hopi Partitioned Lands, or section 9(d) of the Settlement Agreement, relating to the implementation of sections 700.137 through 700.139 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations, on the New Lands, including failure for reason of insufficient funds made available by appropriations or otherwise, the Tribe may bring an action to quiet possession that relates to the use of the Hopi Partitioned Lands after February 1, 2000, by a Navajo family that is eligible for an accommodation, but fails to enter into an accommodation.

SEC. 8. PAYMENT TO STATE OF ARIZONA.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subject to subsection (b), there are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior $250,000 for fiscal year 1998, to be used by the Secretary of the Interior for making a payment to the State of Arizona.

(b) PAYMENT.—The Secretary shall make a payment in the amount specified in subsection (a) to the State of Arizona after an initial acquisition of land from the State has been made by the Secretary pursuant to section 6.

SEC. 9. 75-YEAR LEASING AUTHORITY.

The first section of the Act of August 9, 1955 (69 Stat. 539, chapter 615; 25 U.S.C. 415) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsections:

"(c) LEASES INVOLVING THE HOPI TRIBE AND THE HOPI PARTITIONED LANDS ACCOMMODATION AGREEMENT.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), a lease of land by the Hopi Tribe to Navajo Indians on the Hopi Partitioned Lands may be for a term of 75 years, and may be extended at the conclusion of the term of the lease.

"(d) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

"(1) the term 'Hopi Partitioned Lands' means lands located in the Hopi Partitioned Area, as defined in section 168.1(g) of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this subsection); and

"(2) the term 'Navajo Indians' means members of the Navajo Tribe.".

SEC. 10. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE NAVAJO-HOPI RELOCATION HOUSING PROGRAM.

Section 25(a)(8) of Public Law 93–531 (25 U.S.C. 640d–24(a)(8)) is amended by striking "1996, and 1997" and inserting "1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000".

SEC. 11. EFFECT OF THIS ACT ON CASES INVOLVING THE NAVAJO NATION AND THE HOPI TRIBE.

Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall be interpreted or deemed to preclude, limit, or endorse, in any manner, actions by the Navajo Nation that seek, in court, an offset from judgments for payments received by the Hopi Tribe under the Settlement Agreement.

SEC. 12. WATER RIGHTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) WATER RIGHTS.—Subject to the other provisions of this section, newly acquired trust lands shall have only the following water rights:

(A) The right to the reasonable use of groundwater pumped from such lands.

(B) All rights to the use of surface water on such lands existing under State law on the date of acquisition, with the priority date of such right under State law.

(C) The right to make any further beneficial use on such lands which is unappropriated on the date each parcel of newly acquired trust lands is taken into trust. The priority date for the right shall be the date the lands are taken into trust.

(2) RIGHTS NOT SUBJECT TO FORFEITURE OR ABANDONMENT.—The Tribe's water rights for newly acquired trust lands shall not be subject to forfeiture or abandonment arising from events occurring after the date the lands are taken into trust.

(b) RECOGNITION AS VALID USES.—

(1) GROUNDWATER.—With respect to water rights associated with newly acquired trust lands, the Tribe, and the United States on the Tribe's behalf, shall recognize as valid all uses of groundwater which may be made from wells (or their subsequent replacements) in existence on the date each parcel of newly acquired trust land is acquired and shall not object to such groundwater uses on the basis of water rights associated with the newly acquired trust lands. The Tribe, and the United States on the Tribe's behalf, may object only to the impact of groundwater uses on newly acquired trust lands which are initiated after the date the lands affected are taken into trust and only on grounds allowed by the State law as it exists when the objection is made. The Tribe, and the United States on the Tribe's behalf, shall not object to the impact of groundwater uses on the Tribe's right to surface water established pursuant to subsection (a)(3) when those groundwater uses are initiated before the Tribe initiates its beneficial use of surface water pursuant to subsection (a)(3).

(2) SURFACE WATER.—With respect to water rights associated with newly acquired trust lands, the Tribe, and the United States on the Tribe's behalf, shall recognize as valid all uses of surface water in existence on or prior to the date each parcel of newly acquired trust land is acquired and shall not object to such surface water uses on the basis of water rights associated with the newly acquired trust lands, but shall have the right to enforce the priority of its rights against all junior water rights the exercise of which interfere with the actual use of the Tribe's senior surface water rights.

(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in paragraph (1) or (2) shall preclude the Tribe, or the United States on the Tribe's behalf, from asserting objections to water rights and uses on the basis of the Tribe's water rights on its currently existing trust lands.

(c) APPLICABILITY OF STATE LAW ON LANDS OTHER THAN NEWLY ACQUIRED LANDS.—The Tribe, and the United States on the Tribe's behalf, further recognize that State law applies to water uses on lands, including subsurface estates, that exist within the exterior boundaries of newly acquired trust lands and that are owned by any party other than the Tribe.

(d) ADJUDICATION OF WATER RIGHTS ON NEWLY ACQUIRED TRUST LANDS.—The Tribe's water rights on newly acquired trust lands shall be adjudicated with the rights of all other competing users in the court now presiding over the Little Colorado River Adjudication, or if that court no longer has jurisdiction, in the appropriate State or Federal court. Any controversies between or among users arising under Federal or State law involving the Tribe's water rights on newly acquired trust lands shall be resolved in the court now presiding over the Little Colorado River Adjudication, or, if that court no longer has jurisdiction, in the appropriate State or Federal court. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to affect any court's jurisdiction: *Provided,* That the Tribe shall administer all water rights established in subsection (a).

(e) PROHIBITION.—Water rights for newly acquired trust lands shall not be used, leased, sold, or transported for use off of such lands or the Tribe's other trust lands: *Provided,* That the Tribe may agree with other persons having junior water rights to subordinate the Tribe's senior water rights. Water rights for newly acquired trust lands can only be used on those lands or other trust lands of the Tribe located within the same river basin tributary to the main stream of the Colorado River.

(f) SUBSURFACE INTERESTS.—On any newly acquired trust lands where the subsurface interest is owned by any party other than the Tribe, the trust status of the surface ownership shall not impair any existing right of the subsurface owner to develop the subsurface interest and to have access to the surface for the purpose of such development.

(g) STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION WITH RESPECT TO WATER RIGHTS OF OTHER FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED INDIAN TRIBES.—Nothing in this section shall affect the water rights of any other federally recognized Indian tribe with a priority date earlier than the date the newly acquired trust lands are taken into trust.

(h) STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to determine the law applicable to water use on lands owned by the United States, other than on the newly acquired trust lands. The granting of the right to make beneficial use of unappropriated surface water on the newly acquired trust lands with a priority date such lands are taken into trust shall not be construed to imply that such right is a Federal reserved water

right. Nothing in this section or any other provision of this Act shall be construed to establish any Federal reserved right to groundwater. Authority for the Secretary to take land into trust for the Tribe pursuant to the Settlement Agreement and this Act shall be construed as having been provided solely by the provisions of this Act.

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Vice President of the United States and President of the Senate.