

**Statement of
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Director
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
H.R. 2009, Pascua Yaqui Tribe Land Conveyance Act
September 22, 2016**

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior (Department) on H.R. 2009, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Land Conveyance Act. H.R. 2009 provides that 40 acres of land in the Tucson, Arizona, area are declared to be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe (Tribe); 13 acres are to be sold to the Tucson Unified School District (District); and the District is authorized to acquire the Federal reversionary interest on 27 acres patented under the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act. We appreciate the sponsor's amendment to H.R. 2009, which addresses the concerns raised in our testimony of Nov. 4, 2015, on the bill as introduced. The Department supports H.R. 2009 as referred to the Senate.

Background

The Pascua Yaqui Tribe's lands are located in Pima County, near Tucson, Arizona, and are a combination of lands held in trust by the United States and lands purchased and held in fee by the Tribe. The District has historically operated the Hohokam School on lands nearby and adjacent to the tribal lands. The District currently holds two parcels of land under separate R&PP patents totaling approximately 67 acres, in which the United States holds reversionary interests enforceable under the R&PP Act. This land consists of a tract of approximately 27 acres on which the Hohokam School currently sits and another tract of approximately 40 acres that is currently undeveloped. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) also manages an unencumbered tract of approximately 13 acres located between the two parcels patented to the District which have been identified as potentially suitable for disposal in the current Resource Management Plan.

H.R. 2009

H.R. 2009 declares that approximately 40 acres of land, designated in the bill as "Parcel A", are held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Tribe on the day after the District relinquishes all of its right, title, and interest to the 40 acres. In addition, the bill authorizes the Secretary to convey to the District a parcel of 13 acres of currently unencumbered public lands, designated in the bill as "Parcel B", subject to valid existing rights and payment of fair market value. Also, the bill authorizes the Secretary to convey to the District the Federal reversionary interest in 27.5 acres of land, designated in the bill as "Parcel C", previously patented to the District under the R&PP Act upon the District's payment of the appraised value to the Department.

Conclusion

H.R. 2009 represents an opportunity to improve land use for both the Tribe and the District on these three tracts of land. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I will be glad to answer any questions.