

**Statement of
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Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior
Before The
House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs
H.R. 2302, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Land Transfer Act**

April 30, 2025

Good afternoon Chairman Hurd, Ranking Member Leger Fernández, and Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Bryan Mercier, and I am the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) at the Department of the Interior (Department).

Thank you for the opportunity to present this statement on behalf of the Department regarding H.R. 1451, Quapaw Tribal Settlement Act of 2025; H.R. 2302, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Land Transfer Act of 2025; H.R. 2389, Quinault Indian Nation Land Transfer Act; and H.R. 2400, Pit River Land Transfer Act of 2025.

H.R. 2302, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Land Transfer Act of 2025

H.R. 2302 would take land in El Dorado County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians. The bill would revoke Public Land Order 3309 (29 FR 609) and transfer the administrative jurisdiction of 40 acres of Federal land utilized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service to the Secretary. Those acres, in addition to 45.3 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-managed lands and 118.84 acres of Tribally owned fee land would also be placed into trust for the benefit of the Tribe. The combined lands, 2 of 3 approximately 204.14 acres, would be part of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians reservation and administered in accordance with the laws and regulations generally applicable to property held in trust by the United States for an Indian Tribe. The land placed into trust would not be eligible for class II or class III gaming under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (Pub. L. 100-497).

The lands that would be placed into trust under H.R. 2302 are noncontiguous to the existing Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians trust lands. The Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians has stated that the lands would be used to support housing and essential services for Tribal members. If H.R. 2302 were enacted, the Department would effectuate the change in status in the Trust Asset Accounting Management System within 180 days. Under the bill, the land transfer would be subject to valid existing rights. The Department notes that valid existing rights on the affected BLM-managed parcels may include a right-of-way issued to the Bureau of Reclamation in perpetuity for a main waterline from Placerville to El Dorado Hills.

Congress, through its plenary authority, can direct the Department to accept and administer lands to be held in trust for the benefit of a Tribe through legislation. Acquisition of land in trust for

the benefit of Indian Tribes is essential to Tribal sovereignty and empowers Tribal self determination in the use of Tribal lands to best serve their communities and create economic growth. The Administration supports conveying these lands into trust for the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, and would like to work with the sponsor and Subcommittee to address technical changes, including language under Section 2(b) to require a land description review to determine if a land survey is required. We would also welcome the opportunity to work with the sponsor to verify the acreage numbers referenced in the bill.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be glad to answer any questions the Subcommittee may have.