

Statement for the Record
Department of the Interior
House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs
H.R. 2212 Land into Trust for the Susanville Indian Rancheria
June 10, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.R. 2212 which would take approximately 300 acres located in Lassen County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Susanville Indian Rancheria (Rancheria). The Department of the Interior supports H.R. 2212.

Background

The original 30 acres of the Rancheria were purchased by the Tribe in 1923 under the Landless and Homeless Act. Several other purchases and donations have been made since that time, bringing the total land base of the Rancheria to approximately 1,100 acres in trust status. The Rancheria has expressed interest in expanding their land base to include approximately 300 acres currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and located adjacent to the Upper Rancheria. The BLM understands that trust status for this land would enable the Tribe to construct housing and training facilities for tribal fire crews, and manage the lands for native plants used by the Tribe. These lands are currently identified for disposal under the Eagle Lake Field Office Resource Management Plan. Additionally, the BLM administers three rights-of-way for telecommunications, utility, and transportation uses on the lands proposed to be taken into trust.

H.R. 2212

H.R. 2212 declares that approximately 300 acres of BLM-managed lands in Lassen County, California is to be taken into trust, along with improvement and appurtenances for the benefit of the Rancheria. This action would be subject to valid existing rights. Under the bill, class II and class III gaming under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) would be prohibited on these lands.

The Department supports taking only the lands, less improvements and appurtenances, into trust for the Rancheria. The Department only takes lands into trust for the benefit of a tribe, here, the Rancheria.

The Department also notes that the map referenced in Section 1(b) of the bill is not dated. We welcome the opportunity, in cooperation with the bill's sponsor, to create a legislative map for the purposes of this bill and the BLM will develop a legal description for the purposes of transferring administrative jurisdiction. Finally, the Department would also like to work with the sponsor on minor technical corrections.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation which would provide important benefits to the Rancheria.