

there have been many times I have appeared before this committee in the last 8 years and it has always been a pleasure to appear and it has always been stimulating to deal with the members of this committee on matters of public policy.

Of course this is one of the most important and one of the most controversial Indian policy questions before this committee or that has come before the committee in the past.

I am glad to appear before you to discuss the provisions of S. 1624, S. 1625 and H.R. 3306 which declare that certain lands be conveyed to or held in trust for the Pueblo de Taos Indians of New Mexico.

As I pointed out in my written report to you on S. 1624 and S. 1625 I favor the enactment of H.R. 3306 which was passed by the House of Representatives on June 18, 1968.

S. 1624 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to convey fee title to the Pueblo de Taos Indians for 3,150 acres of land including Blue Lake.

S. 1625 is similar in nature, except that it provides that the 3,150 acres will be held in trust for the Pueblo de Taos Indians. Other provisions of the bills provide that the Secretary of Agriculture shall continue to protect the area from fire, insects, and diseases, maintain favorable conditions of waterflow, conserve and protect the natural resources of the area, maintain sanitary conditions and take such other steps as are necessary to protect the adjacent national forest lands.

Both S. 1624 and S. 1625 direct the Secretary of Agriculture to amend the permit granted to the Pueblo de Taos Indians, pursuant to section 4 of the act of May 31, 1933 (48 Stat. 108) to exclude these 3,150 acres.

Other provisions set forth specific authorities for the Secretary of Agriculture to exercise in administering the remainder of the existing permit area as a part of the Carson National Forest.

In a recent discussion with Departmental officials, Taos Pueblo Governor Seferino Martinez states that he reflected the opinion of the council and people of Taos in opposing these two bills, and expressed the Pueblo's continued support for legislation identical with that of H.R. 3306.

The Pueblo has a legitimate and just claim in our view, to the remaining 44,850 acres which are included in H.R. 3305, but are not included in S. 1624 and S. 1625. This was decided by the Indian Claims Commission in *Pueblo de Taos v. United States of America*, docket No. 357.

In fact, the Indian Claims Commission determined that the Pueblo de Taos had Indian title to 130,000 acres including the 48,000 acre Blue Lake area, before it was taken from the Pueblo in 1906 to be made a part of the Carson National Forest.

I believe that H.R. 3306 affords our Government an opportunity to right a wrong that was done to these Indians, in the only manner that will be meaningful to the Indians.

The Taos Pueblo Indians since about the 12th century have occupied and used the area of which this land is a part. The area does not represent, so far as the Indians are concerned just land from which a livelihood is obtained. The exercise of their religious worship is dependent on this tract of land.

In our report on this bill we have quoted at length from the findings of the Indian Claims Commission regarding the religious significance of this particular land—not any land but this particular land.