

RESOLUTION

BLUE LAKE LAND CLAIM—TAOS PUEBLO

Whereas Congressman James A. Haley has introduced in the House of Representatives H.R. 3306 (90th Congress, 1st Session to restore to the Pueblo of Taos its religious sanctuary consisting of 50,000 acres of land in the Carson National Forest; and

Whereas in Docket No. 357 on September 8, 1965, the Indian Claims Commission affirmed that the United States Government took the Blue Lake Area unjustly and without compensation, and incorporated it into the national forests; and

Whereas as long as the Federal Government holds title to the Area, the right of these American citizens to practice their religion depends upon the sufferance of the Government, in violation of the United States Constitution; and

Whereas at the meeting at Santa Fe, New Mexico, on April 13, 1966, by Resolution 2, the NCAI endorsed S. 3085 (89th Congress) similar to H.R. 3306; however, S. 3085 was not enacted by the Congress: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the NCAI, in convention assembled at Portland, Oregon, October 2-6, 1967, does hereby endorse and unanimously urge the passage of H.R. 3306, which would, in effect, make the Blue Lake Area a part of the Pueblo of Taos Reservation, to be administered the same as the other trust or restricted Indian land, subject, nevertheless to the exclusive use and benefit of the Pueblo of Taos, and that the United States Congress is strongly urged to support the passage of this bill.

WENDELL CHINO, *President*.

Senator ANDERSON. Do you think this bill in anyway would set a precedent?

Mr. BELINDO. I think a precedent would probably be set either way with respect to land ownership.

Senator ANDERSON. What sort of defense would the Government have if all of these bills were passed?

Mr. BELINDO. Do you mean if Indians wanted to claim some of the great historical places of our Nation?

Senator ANDERSON. Yes.

Mr. BELINDO. I don't believe a precedent would be set if I can rely upon the legal counsel for the Pueblo Tribe. I am not sure I know exactly what you mean in terms of the law but the central point here is, I believe, that Indians in this particular part of the country have always owned that land and are traditionally bound to the land and have stayed there and maintained a home and an environment which they have become accustomed to. What they are asking for is not relief.

Right now I think they are praying for a miracle and that would be a precedent, a miracle that would restore 48,000 acres of land to them for their use and ownership.

Senator ANDERSON. You have heard testimony that some of those areas have never been owned by the Indians. Do you think that land should be given to the Indians?

Mr. BELINDO. I am sorry, sir; I couldn't hear you.

Senator ANDERSON. The two green plots on the map are lands which have never been in Indian ownership except the aboriginal title. Do you think those lands should be given to the Indians also?

Mr. BELINDO. Absolutely, definitely.

Senator ANDERSON. Why?

Mr. BELINDO. Aboriginal title, means a lot and I think this point of law will be delineated more carefully as tribal groups begin to get their own legal education and defense programs. The aboriginal right