

SAINT JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
Alamogordo, N. Mex., September 18, 1968.

Senator GEORGE MCGOVERN,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR MCGOVERN: I understand the next hurdle for H.R. 3306, the Blue Lake bill, comes in the Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, and I was happy to learn that you are Chairman of this subcommittee, as I believe you are one able to favor the rights of a minority even when selfish interests are in conflict. I favor the bill and hope you will work for its passage.

Yours very sincerely,

ALEXANDER BLAIR.

CARLSBAD, N. MEX., *July 2, 1968.*

HON. CLINTON P. ANDERSON,
*U.S. Senator,
 Senate Office Building,
 Washington, D.C.*

DEAR SENATOR ANDERSON: I understand that a Bill has passed the House of Representatives and is now in Senate Committee which would give the Taos Indians approximately 50,000 acres of Carson National Forest lands in the Blue Lake area of northern New Mexico. Certainly, the Taos Indians have good claim to this land or such a bill would never have passed the House. But I feel the following points should be carefully considered before giving 75 square miles of land away.

- (1) Are the Indians prepared to assume the responsibility of fire control in an area this size?
- (2) Are the Indians capable and financially able to spray the timber stands in this area to protect this timber?
- (3) Are the Indians qualified to protect this important Rio Grande watershed area, which must be preserved?

If the answers to these questions are "no", I feel that a working agreement between the Taos Indians and the National Forest Service could be worked up where the Forest Service could assume these responsibilities, but do we know if the Indians would allow it, or even want it, after they own this land.

Would a land transfer such as this set a bad precedent? I think so. I can see the possibility of claims to National Forest lands by other Indian Tribes as well as by other groups of people. Would the Congress of the United States be justified in giving 50,000 acres of National Forest land away in this case and denying future claims? I am sure the Government could retain a much stronger position in regard to future land claims if this claim is denied. However, considering the importance of Blue Lake and the immediate surrounding area to the Taos Indians, a flat denial is not the answer. Even though I do not agree with the Indians on this matter, I do respect their belief and request.

A compromise may be a possible solution. I would like to suggest that the land immediately surrounding Blue Lake, which is their ceremonial area, be given to them with the rest of the land in question retained by Carson National Forest. An arrangement such as this should not greatly weaken the Government's position in future land claims and at the same time should meet the request of the Taos Indians as they would own Blue Lake and their ceremonial area.

Sincerely yours,

JACK H. HUNT.

JULY 22, 1968.

Senator CLINTON ANDERSON,
*U.S. Senator, State of New Mexico,
 Senate Office Building, Washington D.C.*

DEAR SENATOR ANDERSON: This letter concerns the area of Blue Lake in Taos County, New Mexico, and the attempts of the Taos Indians to claim it. Specifically, I am asking you to resist these attempts with every force and stratagem at your disposal and to encourage the other members of New Mexico's congressional delegation to do the same.

This is not the place to review in detail the many facets of the Taos Indian's claim. I would like to touch on some of the aspects known to me:

The lands in question, in the last 30 years or so, have been in part, in possession of the Taos Indians. They abused them horribly by overgrazing and were