

LAS CRUCES, N. MEX., July 19, 1968.

HON. CLINTON P. ANDERSON,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR ANDERSON: I am writing to express my objection to the bill, HR 3306, which the House passed recently and which would give 48,000 acres of land to the Taos Indians. I was a resident of Taos for a number of years, am an employee of Mountain States Telephone Company and now live in Las Cruces.

Many people in the Taos area object to this give-away to the Indians. I recognize and appreciate the need of the Indians for the Blue Lake area for religious purposes. This area has been protected for their exclusive use by the Forest Service. It is my understanding that you have proposed to let the Indians have a small area around Blue Lake. In my opinion this would be fair and would satisfy the Indians' religious interests.

The people of Taos are also concerned about their water supplies, portions of which come from the Blue Lake area. This precious water might possibly be affected if the land is not carefully managed.

I feel that these lands will be forever lost to the people of New Mexico and the United States if this bill is passed by the Senate. I think that the land is being adequately protected and managed by the Forest Service for the Indians and also for the people of Taos and New Mexico.

Your truly,

JOE M. MONTANO.

TAOS, N. MEX., September 15, 1968.

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

DEAR SENATOR MCGOVERN: A delegate from Taos County to the Democratic State Platform Convention in Albuquerque yesterday, I was unable to attend because of illness, but I note with satisfaction that the convention adopted a resolution urging both you and Senator Anderson to support the bill for the return of the Blue Lake area to the Indians of Taos Pueblo.

I wish to add my personal request that you give full support to H.R. 3306.

I know Senator Anderson has worked consistently for a settlement of the Blue Lake controversy, but the fact is that his proposed "substitute" measure limiting the land to be returned to some 3,000 acres does not in any sense do justice to the matter.

We all know that the land was taken from the Indians by decree and under the guise of letting them have continuous and exclusive use of it. We also know that since it was made a part of the Carson National Forest encroachments on the Indians' rights have continued to multiply.

There is no question of "giving" this land to the Indians. It is a question of "giving it back" to them. The Claims Commission has settled the fact that this land, all 48,000 acres of it, belongs by right to the Taos Pueblo Indians. Their traditional use of it for religious purposes, timber, grazing, and agriculture will not destroy the land's watershed value any more than the Forest Services multi-purpose program that includes use by non-Indians.

I urge you from all that is morally, legally, and historically right to give your full support, both in committee and on the floor of the Senate to H.R. 3306.

Very truly yours,

HERSCHEL M. COLBERT.

TAOS, N. MEX., July 19, 1968.

HON. CLINTON P. ANDERSON,
U.S. Senator, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR ANDERSON: I am writing to let you know of my objections to H.R. Bill 3306, recently passed by the House. I understand that this bill will come before the Senate very soon. I am very much opposed to giving 48,000 acres to the Taos Pueblo Indians. I agree that they need the Blue Lake area for their religious ceremonies. It is proper that they have exclusive use of this sacred ground. I understand that you have proposed an area of about 3,000 acres around Blue Lake for their exclusive use. This is fair and should more than adequately meet their needs.

I feel that the Forest Service can best manage and protect these lands for the Indians. People in Taos are concerned about water quality and quantity that come from these lands. I have seen evidence of misuse on lands presently owned by the Indians. I do not want this to happen in the Pueblo de Taos watershed.