

**TESTIMONY OF  
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BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS  
H.R. 2467, BRIDGEPORT INDIAN COLONY LAND TRUST, HEALTH, AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT ACT**

**JANUARY 25, 2012**

Thank you for the invitation to testify on H.R. 2467, the Bridgeport Indian Colony Land Trust, Health, and Economic Development Act. The legislation directs that approximately 39 acres of land currently administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) be taken into trust for the Bridgeport Paiute Indian Colony of California (Tribe). The Department supports this legislation, and would like to work with the sponsor and Subcommittee to make technical modifications to the bill to ensure that the property to be transferred is accurately described.

The Bridgeport Indian Colony is a federally-recognized tribe located near the town of Bridgeport, in Mono County, California. The Tribe's 40-acre reservation is located approximately a quarter mile from Highway 182, and currently has no highway frontage or pass-through traffic.

The Tribe seeks to have two parcels of BLM managed land transferred to their reservation and held in trust by the United States. The 31.86-acre Bridgeport Parcel, which was identified by the BLM for disposal in a 2004 amendment to the Bishop Resource Management Plan, lies between the Tribe's current reservation and Highway 182. The Bridgeport Parcel is contiguous to the existing Colony. Trust status for this parcel would enable the Tribe to construct housing and a community activity center, and facilitate economic development. The 7.5-acre Bridgeport Camp Antelope Parcel, near the small town of Walker, is currently under lease to the Toiyabe Indian Health Project for operation of a community health clinic under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. The Toiyabe Indian Health Project is operated by a consortium of tribes. The clinic is currently closed, but the Bridgeport Indian Tribe has expressed a desire to reopen this facility, which has suffered major interior water damage and has been vacant since December, 2005. The Tribe has sought a means to acquire the Bridgeport parcel for many years, and the BLM has been working cooperatively to help them achieve this goal under existing authorities. The Bridgeport Camp Antelope Parcel has been under a Recreation and Public Purposes Act lease since 1987.

Under H.R. 2467, the United States would hold in trust for the Tribe both the Bridgeport and Bridgeport Camp Antelope Parcels, subject to valid existing rights. The Department supports H.R. 2467.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's support for H.R. 2467. We would be happy to answer any questions the Subcommittee may have.

**Statement for the Record  
Bureau of Land Management  
Department of the Interior**

**House Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs**

**S. 292, Salmon Lake Land Selection Resolution Act**

**January 25, 2012**

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of Interior on S. 292, the Salmon Lake Land Selection Resolution Act. As a party to the Salmon Lake Area Land Ownership Consolidation Agreement, the BLM has supported efforts between the State of Alaska and the Bering Straits Native Corporation (BSNC) to resolve competing land selections at Salmon Lake. As such, BLM supports S. 292, with one minor technical amendment, because it will ratify the agreement between the BLM, BSNC, and the State of Alaska; and allow for a reasonable and practicable conveyance of lands in the Salmon Lake area.

**Background**

Salmon Lake is located on the Seward Peninsula, approximately 40 miles northeast of Nome. The lake is one of the largest bodies of fresh water on the peninsula, and has long been an important source of food and resources for the Native people. Because the area contains significant fisheries and other subsistence resources, it remains a popular resource and destination for local communities.

The BLM is responsible for expediting the conveyance of Federal lands to Native corporations, including the BSNC, under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), and to the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act of 1958.

The BSNC, the Native regional corporation for the Bering Straits area, and the State of Alaska each sought to gain title to the Salmon Lake area through selection applications filed under respective provisions of ANCSA and the Alaska Statehood Act. However, the land addressed by the two applications overlapped. The BSNC and the State negotiated a resolution to this issue whereby each entity would receive title to distinct lands. The BLM supported this resolution, and the three parties signed the Salmon Lake Area Land Ownership Consolidation Agreement on July 18, 2007. Legislation is now required to ratify the Agreement between the United States (acting through the Department of Interior, BLM), the BSNC, and the State of Alaska. The Agreement would have expired January 1, 2011, but its term was extended until January 1, 2013 in anticipation of ratifying legislation. Accordingly, the Department recommends that Section 3(1)(b) of the bill be amended to reflect the extension of the Agreement to January 1, 2013.

**S. 292**

S. 292 represents an opportunity to resolve the overlapping land selections between the BSNC and the State. The bill would ratify the Agreement between the BLM, the BSNC, and the State,

and allow for finalization of land conveyances in the Salmon Lake area. The lands would be transferred in accordance with the terms of the signed agreement.

As noted, the BLM supported the efforts between the BSNC and State, and signed the agreement to recognize the desires of the entities. The bill would also further the intent of the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act of 2004 (PL 108-452), expediting the transfer of title to Federal lands to Native corporations and the State of Alaska.

**Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our statement for the record in support of S. 292.