

Showing Current Law as Amended by H.R. 5696

[new text highlighted in yellow; text to be deleted bracketed and highlighted in blue]

25 U.S.C. § 2218: Approval of leases, rights-of-way, and sales of natural resources

(a) Approval by the Secretary

(1) In general

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may approve any lease or agreement that affects individually owned allotted land or any other land held in trust or restricted status by the Secretary on behalf of an Indian, if—

(A) the owners of not less than the applicable percentage (determined under subsection (b)) of the undivided interest in the allotted land that is covered by the lease or agreement consent in writing to the lease or agreement; and

(B) the Secretary determines that approving the lease or agreement is in the best interest of the owners of the undivided interest in the allotted land.

(2) Rule of construction

Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to leases involving coal or uranium.

(3) Definition

In this section, the term “allotted land” includes any land held in trust or restricted status by the Secretary on behalf of one or more Indians.

(b) Applicable percentage

(1) Percentage interest

The applicable percentage referred to in subsection (a)(1) shall be determined as follows:

(A) If there are 5 or fewer owners of the undivided interest in the allotted land, the applicable percentage shall be 90 percent.

(B) If there are more than 5 such owners, but fewer than 11 such owners, the applicable percentage shall be 80 percent.

(C) If there are more than 10 such owners, but fewer than 20 such owners, the applicable percentage shall be 60 percent.

(D) If there are 20 or more such owners, the applicable percentage shall be a majority of the interests in the allotted land.

(2) Determination of owners

(A) In general

For purposes of this subsection, in determining the number of owners of, and their interests in, the undivided interest in the allotted land with respect to a lease or agreement, the Secretary shall make such determination based on the records of the Department of the Interior that identify the owners of such lands and their interests and the number of owners of such land on the date on which the lease or agreement involved is submitted to the Secretary under this section.

(B) Rule of construction

Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall be construed to authorize the Secretary to treat an Indian tribe as the owner of an interest in allotted land that did not escheat to the tribe pursuant to section 2206 of this title as a result of the Supreme Court's decision in *Babbitt v. Youpee* (117 S [1] Ct. 727 (1997)).

(c) Authority of Secretary to sign lease or agreement on behalf of certain owners

The Secretary may give written consent to a lease or agreement under subsection (a)—

(1) on behalf of the individual Indian owner if the owner is deceased and the heirs to, or devisees of, the interest of the deceased owner have not been determined; or

(2) on behalf of any heir or devisee referred to in paragraph (1) if the heir or devisee has been determined but cannot be located

(d) Effect of approval

(1) Application to all parties

(A) In general

Subject to paragraph (2), a lease or agreement approved by the Secretary under subsection (a) shall be binding on the parties described in subparagraph (B), to the same extent as if all of the owners of the undivided interest in allotted land covered under the lease or agreement consented to the lease or agreement.

(B) Description of parties

The parties referred to in subparagraph (A) are—

(i) the owners of the undivided interest in the allotted land covered under the lease or agreement referred to in such subparagraph; and

(ii) all other parties to the lease or agreement.

(2) Tribe not treated as party to lease; no effect on tribal sovereignty, immunity

(A) In general

Subparagraph (B) shall apply with respect to any undivided interest in allotted land held by the Secretary in trust for a tribe if a lease or agreement under subsection (a) is otherwise applicable to such undivided interest by reason of this section even though the Indian tribe did not consent to the lease or agreement.

(B) Application of lease

The lease or agreement described in subparagraph (A) shall apply to the portion of the undivided interest in allotted land described in such paragraph (including entitlement of the Indian tribe to payment under the lease or agreement), and the Indian tribe shall not be treated as being a party to the lease or agreement. Nothing in this section (or in the lease or agreement) shall be construed to affect the sovereignty of the Indian tribe.

(e) Distribution of proceeds

(1) In general

The proceeds derived from a lease or agreement that is approved by the Secretary under subsection (a) shall be distributed to all owners of undivided interest in the allotted land covered under the lease or agreement.

(2) Determination of amounts distributed

The amount of the proceeds under paragraph (1) that are distributed to each owner under that paragraph shall be determined in accordance with the portion of the undivided interest in the allotted land covered under the lease or agreement that is owned by that owner.

(f) Rule of construction

Nothing in this section shall be construed to amend or modify the provisions of Public Law 105–188 (25 U.S.C. 396 note), the American Indian Agricultural Resources Management Act (25 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.), title II of the Indian Land Consolidation Act Amendments of 2000, or any other Act that provides specific standards for the percentage of ownership interest that must approve a lease or agreement on a specified reservation.

(g) Other laws

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to supersede, repeal, or modify any general or specific statute authorizing the grant or approval of any type of land use transaction involving fractional interests in trust or restricted land.

(h) Tribal appraisals under self-governance realty programs.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary—

- (1) shall not require an appraisal prepared by or reviewed by the Department of the Interior for a conveyance or acquisition of trust or restricted land by an Indian tribe, if—**

(A) the tribe is a party to a self-governance compact or contract under title I or title IV of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act;

(B) the tribe has assumed responsibility for realty or land management functions under such compact or contract, including the authority to conduct appraisals or valuations; and

(C) the land is located within the exterior boundaries of the tribe's reservation, or contiguous to lands already held in trust for the tribe; and

(D) the appraisal conforms to Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice; and

(2) if the criteria described in subparagraphs (A) through (D) of paragraph (1) are met, shall accept appraisals or valuations conducted under the tribe's compacted program as sufficient to establish fair market value.