

Testimony of Dennis Lee Forsgren
on Behalf of the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida
Committee on Natural Resources Full Committee Hearing
Native American and Tribal bills
April 9, 2008

Good morning Mr. Chairman, I am Dennis Lee Forsgren Jr. and I am testifying today on behalf of the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida in support of H.R. 5680, A bill To amend certain laws relating to Native Americans, and for others purposes, introduced by Rep. Grijalva (AZ-7) on April 2, 2008.

The Miccosukee Tribe is especially supportive of Section 10 of H.R 5680 which would place certain lands currently owned by the Tribe in Miami-Dade County Florida into Trust. We would like to express our thanks to Mr. Grijalva for including this provision and to thank Representative Kendrick Meeks for his tireless efforts on behalf of this provision.

These lands located in the Kendal Lakes section of Miami-Dade County Florida near Miami. The legal description of the parcel that the Tribe seeks to put into trust are well within the Tribes traditional ancestral area of South Florida. The land is only a few miles from existing reservation, and would make a highly rational addition to the Tribe's trust lands

The Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida has been seeking to have this land, Miccosukee Golf & Country Club enterprise, placed in trust since 2003. Unfortunately, no final action has been taken by the Department of the Interior, even though the Tribe long ago clearly fulfilled all the requirements in law, and there is no sign that final agency action will be taken in the foreseeable future.

Given the unreasonable period of time that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has taken regarding the Tribe's request that the Miccosukee Golf & Country Club enterprise lands be taken into Trust, the Committee can understand why the Tribe has felt compelled to seek legislative relief.

For the record the Miccosukee Tribe does not intend to use these lands for any gaming purpose, and this provision would not permit gaming in any event. Also the Tribe does not intend to make any substantive change in land use from their existing use as a golf course.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and the other members of this committee for your hard work on H.R. 5680 and I would be happy to answer any questions that you are the Committee might have regarding Section 10.