

OCTOBER 17, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The President has signed S. 557--Land transfer, Pueblo of Laguna, New Mexico. This bill declares some 520 acres of land to be held in trust for the Pueblo of Laguna Indians. The land covered by this bill is surrounded by land already held in trust for the Pueblo of Laguna Indians.

The President has signed S. 1327--Submarginal land trust for Indians. This bill provides that certain submarginal land of the United States shall be held in trust for designated Indian tribes and be made a part of the reservations of said Indians. During the 1930's, the Department of Agriculture purchased some eleven million acres of submarginal farmland that was no longer suitable for cultivation. The majority of this land remains in Federal ownership.

The Federal Government presently retains title to somewhat less than 400,000 acres of Indian submarginal lands which are being managed by Interior for the use and benefit of seventeen Indian tribes. Most of this land lies within the various Indian reservations' current boundaries. Federal title to the Indian submarginal lands has proven to be unsatisfactory because it creates a situation in which land management units are partially both Indian-owned and Federally-owned. This has impeded the Indian's desire and ability to maximize the economic development of their reservations because tenure and title to the submarginal lands are uncertain.

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