

A commission is to be appointed by the Secretary to assist the Secretary in carrying out his functions. Both the State and the Natives will be represented. The commission will be responsible for identifying the Native groups, preparing membership rolls, preparing voting rolls, and performing any other functions assigned.

Pending completion of the foregoing procedure, the Secretary may withdraw lands that are subject to grant to the Natives. The lands so withdrawn will not be subject to State selection. The lands not withdrawn will be subject to State selection regardless of Native use and occupancy claims. This procedure should substantially speed up the State selection process.

In recognition of the fact that the Natives claim use and occupancy of areas that are much larger than the areas that may be granted to them, the bill permits the State to initiate an action in the Court of Claims on behalf of all Natives, as a single group, to recover from the United States the value of the additional lands to which the Natives have a valid use and occupancy claim. The value of the lands will be determined as of March 30, 1867, which is the date Alaska was acquired by the United States. Such acquisition would be regarded as an extinguishment of all aboriginal titles. The Tlingit and Haida Indians who have already recovered a judgment against the United States based on use and occupancy will not be allowed to participate in this litigation, and Natives who have claims pending before the Indian Claims Commission will be required to elect between proceeding with their separate claims or dismissing them and joining in the State prosecuted action.

No

The bill authorizes the appropriation of not to exceed \$12 million to pay the costs involved in making the land conveyances to the Native groups. We are not able to estimate the amount of any judgment that may be recovered in the Court of Claims.

The enactment of legislation to settle the Alaska Native land claims is long overdue, and we urge prompt consideration of the enclosed bill.