Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Regulations for the preparation of plans for the use of distribution of judgments made to American Indian tribes or groups by the Indian Claims Commission or the United States Court of Claims have been published in the Federal Register of January 15, 1974, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson announced today.

In compliance with the Act of October 19, 1973 (87 Stat. 466, 467, 468), a public hearing on the proposed regulations was held at Denver, Colorado, on December 13, 1973. In addition, numerous oral and written comments, suggestions or objections to the proposed regulations were sent to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and received consideration equal to that given to all oral testimony presented at the public hearing.

The proposed regulations were amended as a result of the hearing, written and oral comments, and continued Departmental and Bureau review.

In implementing a 180-day time schedule set by the 1973 Act for the disposition of judgment funds, the regulations:

Provide for the earliest possible completion of research to identify the ultimate or present-day beneficiaries of judgments.

Provide for the affected Indian tribe or group to hold a preliminary meeting of the tribal governing body, or a public meeting, to develop a proposal for the use of distribution of its judgment funds. The, Area Director or Superintendents will assist in arranging these meetings and make available technical assistance to the Indian people.

Provide for a hearing of record to receive testimony on the tribal proposal for the use or distribution of the funds.

Within 180 days of the appropriation of judgment funds, or in the case of awards for which covering funds were appropriated prior to passage of the 1973 Act, within 180 days from the date of that Act, the Secretary of the Interior will submit the final proposed plan, and ,other pertinent items, to the Chairmen of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and to the governing body of each affected tribe or group. Unless ether the Senate or the House disapproves a submitted plan by resolution, it becomes effective on the 60th day from its submission to the Committees.

Disapproval of a plan will require the submitting of proposed legislation for the use or distribution of the funds, after further consultation with the affected Indian tribe or group