Media Contact: Office of Secretary
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Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton today announced that he has requested the Justice Department to institute a suit to determine the rights of the Pyramid Lake Indians under the Winters Rights Doctrine with the priority date of 1859, and that the complaint to be filed set forth those rights on the Truckee River that have previously been decreed by the court.

In order to insure that the Tribes positions fully presented to the court. Secretary Morton also recommended that the Tribe be permitted to intervene as a party.

Pyramid Lake, a natural resource of national significance, is located about 30 miles northeast of Reno, Nevada, and is within the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation, home of the Paiute Indians. At present, the Tribe has no court decreed rights to water of the Truckee River to maintain the lake.

Secretary Morton also announced that action will be taken to maximize the flow of water into Pyramid Lake. Legislation will be sought to develop supplementary sources of water, including a "cloud seeding" program, and to investigate the possibility of importing out- of-basin sources of water. Improvement of Truckee- Carson River Irrigation District facilities will be initiated.

On April 7, 1972, Secretary Morton announced issuance of operating criteria for the Truckee and Carson Rivers for calendar year 1972 and at the same time requested the Justice Department to take steps to insure that existing water decrees on the Truckee and Carson Rivers are strictly enforced to prevent illegal water uses and to require legitimate users to operate in accordance with the decrees.

The Secretary said that today's actions, and those announced on April 7, represent the first two steps of a broader program to implement the recommendations of the Pyramid Lake Task Force, whose final report was recently submitted following more than two years of intensive study Of the problems and established jointly by the Secretary of the Interior, the Governor of California and the Governor of Nevada.