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Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton, acting on requests by the Pauma and Pala Bands of California Mission Indians, has instructed the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to issue trust patents to those Bands for certain public lands in California.

The directive was issued as a memorandum dated November 4, 1971. The BLM Director was also instructed to notify the Department of Agriculture prior to issuance of the trust patents, inasmuch as some of the lands lie within the boundaries of the Cleveland National Forest. The lands also include several sections in San Bernardino Meridian, San Diego County.

Secretary Morton's move gives recognition to the longstanding continual use that the two groups of Mission Indians have made of the land sections in question. Under a 1907 statute, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to select public lands to patent to Mission Indian groups whose occupancy and possessory claims to such lands had not been protected by patenting authorities residing with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

The original Mission Reserve includes the lands now to be patented to the Pauma and Pala Bands that had been "temporarily" withdrawn in 1903 and remained withdrawn until this time.

In July 1970 both Bands, at general meetings of their respective memberships, voted unanimously to request the Secretary of the Interior to issue them patents in trust. Previously, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had recommended the action.

The new Secretarial directive states: "I hereby make the required finding that the lands identified in the Pala and Pauma tribal resolution were in the occupation and possession of' the respective bands of Mission Indians prior to, and on, March 1, 1907, and that the lands were at that time required and needed by them. I also find that each Indian band has a present use for the lands it seeks pursuant to its respective resolution."