Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Bureau of Indian Affairs is proposing a reV1S10n in Federal regulations in order to tighten environmental protection stipulations in f leases for the surface use of Indian-owned lands under Federal trusteeship.

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce said today the proposed change is being published in the Federal Register. It relates to section 11, part 131, Title 25 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Interested persons have 30 days from the date of publication to submit comments.

Under the proposed change, all surface leases and user permits issued for Indian holdings would henceforth contain provisions to assure compliance with applicable air and water standards, minimize or correct hazards to the public health and safety, and provide for conservation and protection of the environment.

Lessees would be required to provide adequate measures to avoid, control, minimize or correct erosion, contamination or other abuses and damages within or surrounding the leased premises that may result from operations conducted under the lease. Prudent management practices, as well as application of recognized good farming and grazing techniques would be stipulated in leases for farming and grazing operations.

Moreover, leases would contain prov1s1ons for the lessee .to submit in advance general and comprehensive plans of any proposed construction of commercial or industrial developments, including architects' designs, construction specifications, and plans and specifications for installation and use of machinery and equipment.

Comments relating to the proposed reV1S10ns in regulations should be filed in writing with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C. 20242.