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The final report of the Indian Religious Freedom Task Force has been sent to the Congress Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus said today.

Andrus chaired the task force, which was established pursuant to President Carter's signing into law the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. More than thirty Federal agencies were represented on the task force. The report to the Congress was mandated by the Act.

In preparing the report, the Federal agencies and the task force conducted formal consultations with Native traditional religious leaders in Alaska, Hawaii, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Washington.

The Act declares that it is United States policy for Federal agencies to respect the customs, ceremonies, and traditions of Native American religions. For one year, Andrus said, the agencies have examined their policies and procedures, -as required by the Act. They have worked with Native religious and tribal leaders to assure that the interference and insensitivity of the past will not be repeated in future practice.

He said that with this new policy, it is now possible to accommodate administratively most of the Native traditional religious needs under existing statutory authority. He also said many agencies have already removed impediments to Native religious freedom and developed internal mechanisms for continuing consultation on specific concerns. They also are preparing policies which will assure Native religious freedom in relation to Federal actions, incorporating the new policy into existing procedures and practices at the local level.

The report follows the categorical areas of the Congressional resolution, including land and access to sacred sites, including cemeteries; the use and gathering of sacred objects, including those transported across borders and possessed by museums; and ceremonies and traditional rites as they relate to Federal agency practice.