Media Contact: Bureau of Indian Affairs
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The Department of the Interior announced today it has submitted to Congress proposals for legislation that would end Federal trusteeship and supervision 0ver two small Indian reservations in western Washington.

The reservations affected are Lower Elwha embracing 372 acres in Clallam County near Port Angeles and Shoalwater Bay which comprises 334.75 acres in Pacific County southwest of Hoquiam. There are about 80 Indians in the Lower Elwha group and 11 residing on the Shoalwater Bay Reservation.

Under the Department's proposals, which have been endorsed by a majority of the Indians in both groups as well as by State and county officials, the lands on the reservations would be conveyed to the Indians in fee simple or unrestricted status.

In the case of Lower Elwha, the governing council of the Band would provide for a division of the lands among the enrolled members. In the case of Shoalwater Bay, where there is no tribal organization, the legislation divides among the 11 residents all reservation lands except for a cemetery which is to be turned over to a public or nonprofit body.

On both reservations the Indians are well assimilated with the surrounding Don-Indian communities and have been managing their own affairs for a generation more with only a minimum of assistance from the Indian Bureau.