Media Contact: Bureau of Indian Affairs
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The Department of the Interior announced today that it is withdrawing a proposal submitted to Congress on March 4, 1960, for the enactment of legislation that would end Federal trusteeship and supervision over the property of the Lower Elwha Band of Indians in Clallam County, Washington.

The Department's proposal has been introduced as H. R. 11104.

In a letter to Chairman Wayne N. Aspinall of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Under Secretary Elmer F. Bennett explained that the Departments proposal was submitted to Congress in early March after the Lower Elwha tribal council passed a resolution actively supporting and endorsing such legislation.

"When the bill was scheduled for hearing before the Indian Affairs Subcommittee on April 4, 1960," Mr. Bennett added, "we learned for the first time that some of the Indians may have changed their minds. We have since received a copy of the minutes of a special tribal meeting held on March 29, 1960, at which by a vote of 12 to 0 the Indians withdrew their support of the bill.

"Although the Indians may have acted under a mistaken belief about some of the facts, their present wishes are clear. Under these circumstances, the Department withdraws its recommendation that the legislation be enacted. "

The bill would affect a reservation of 372 acres in Clallam County near Port Angeles. The Lower Elwha Band has about 80 members.

Under Secretary Bennett also pointed out that a question of the same kind has arisen about the wishes of the Shoalwater Bay Indians of western Washington concerning H, R. 11098, a similar bill affecting their property which was likewise based on a proposal submitted by the Department. In this case, Mr. Bennett said, the Department is still investigating the facts and will report further to Congress when the investigation is completed.