Media Contact: Bureau of Indian Affairs
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The Department of the Interior today announced its support of legislation that would transfer to the Citizen and of Potawatomi Indians of Oklahoma about 58 acres of federally owned land near Shawnee, Oklahoma.

In a report on H. R. 7990, Assistant Secretary Roger Ernst pointed out that the land was originally part of a large area ceded to the Federal Government in the 1890's by the Citizen Potawatomi and the Absentee Shawnees. Subsequently it is used as the site for a Bureau of Indian Affairs school farm. It has not, however, been used for this purpose for many years.

The value of the tract is estimated at $250 to $275 per acre or $14,250 to $15,675. The Department recommended increasing the 57 acres provided in the bill to 58 acres, so as to give the Indians an adjoining strip.

The Indians propose to use the property as the site for a Potawatomi Community House which would be moved from other federally owned land. Part of the land would also be leased to provide income for improvement and maintenance of the community house.

The bill "provides that the community house would be available not only for the Citizen Band of Potawatomi but also for members of four other Oklahoma tribal groups--the Absentee Shawnee, the Sac and Fox, the Kickapoo, and the Iowa, In its report the Department expressed no opinion on whether the land should transferred to the tribal group in trust or unrestricted status.