Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: December 19, 1997
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Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin Gover today thanked both Congress and President Clinton for approving a land claims settlement act that awards approximately $70 million to five Ottawa and Chippewa tribes of Michigan.

The act, signed by President Clinton on Tuesday, provides a plan for the division, use, and distribution of the funds. The Indian Claims Commission in 1971 awarded $10.3 million to the tribes and certain descendants to compensate them for underpayment for lands ceded to the United States through an 1836 treaty. The 1971 award has grown to nearly $70 million with accrued interest. The act approved this week details the distribution of the funds to the Bay Mills Indian Community; Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians; Little River Band of Odawa Indians; Little Traverse.Band of Odawa Indians; Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe; Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians; and certain descendants.

"I am extremely pleased that this long-awaited settlement is complete and that the funds finally will begin to assist the tribes. We are indebted to Rep. Dale Kildee for sponsoring the bill, to and to Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell and Sen. Don Young for their support of it."