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Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Daniel P. Beard today announced a new policy designed to protect Indian trust assets from adverse impacts of Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) programs and activities.

"The Bureau of Reclamation has a shared responsibility in protecting the rights of Indian tribes," Beard said. "The new policy will help us to assess and mitigate potential impacts on Indian trust assets." Indian trust assets are legal interest in property held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes Such assets include lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights and water rights

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, a sister agency of Reclamation in the Department of the Interior, has primary responsibility for Indian trust. However, the trust responsibility requires that all federal agencies take all actions reasonably necessary to protect trust assets.

The new policy announced today will be incorporated in Reclamation's environmental directives by October 1, 1993.