Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan announced today the formation of a Working Group on Indian Water Settlements, which will report to Interior's Water Policy Council.

The Group's primary tasks will be to establish a set of principles to guide Indian water settlements; assist in the work of negotiating teams dealing with such settlements; and. keep the Council apprised of upcoming actions and report to the Council on the progress of ongoing negotiations, particularly when key decision points are approached.

"The settlement of Indian water claims is an important activity for the Department in meeting its trust responsibility for Indian tribes." said Lujan. "It is also critical in helping to manage and conserve our Nation's water resources."

The Working Group will be chaired by the Counselor to the Secretary. Tim Glidden, with other members to be designated by the Department's Water Policy Council. The Council, headed by Under Secretary of the Interior Frank Bracken, consists of the Assistant Secretaries for Policy, Budget, and Administration; Indian Affairs; Water and Science; Fish and Wildlife and Parks; Land and Minerals Management; and the Department's Solicitor.