Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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I have been informed that demonstrations are planned sometime this weekend in Washington, D.C., and in other parts of the country protesting the resettlement of those Navajo families residing on land partitioned to the Hopi Indian Tribe as a result of the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act (P.L. 93-531) passed by the U.S. Congress in 1974.

There has been and continues to be, a lot of misinformation and distortion of fact, and emotional appeals for support issued by mostly non-Indian activist groups who oppose the law. The actions by these groups have been denounced frequently by both Navajo and Hopi tribal leaders.

I would suggest that groups and organizations who want to help the Indian people involved, use their time and energy to help the tribes and the government achieve a humane and decent resettlement for those required to move to new homelands. We are nearing the end of what has been a long and painful disruption of the lives of many people. I would like to see those participating in demonstrations devote their energies to helping us complete the process by working with those yet to be resettled.

Only about 240 Navajo families remain on the Hopi partitioned lands that are to be resettled. I have visited the area where most Navajos awaiting relocation are residing, and I firmly believe that nearly all of them will agree to move when they are assured that appropriate housing and grazing lands will be available on the "new" lands purchased and added to the Navajo Reservation.

I want to emphasize that there will be no action by the federal government to forcibly remove Navajo families from land belonging to the Hopi Indian Tribe. Congress has recognized that the original July 6, 1986, deadline for completing relocation cannot be met. Extensive counseling of the Navajos affected will be given a high priority in this final phase of resettlement. We hope to complete the process by the end of 1987 and Congress has been so advised.