Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: June 28, 1961
Print PDF

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today announced he has instructed the Bureau of Indian Affairs to examine into the rights of approximately 35 Indian groups in western Washington who have complained to him about asserted encroachments.

He took note of tribal apprehensions generated by Congressional proposals in past years for the termination of Federal protection and services for Indians, and the transfer of criminal and civil jurisdiction over Indian land to State and local governments.

Secretary Udall asked the Bureau to identify the Indians' legal and treaty rights, and how they can be protected. Subject matters of the controversy include hunting and fishing rights, rights to tidelands, clarification of Indian title to various properties, resource development, and tribal government and law and order questions.

Beginning in late July, each of the Indian groups in the western portion of the State will be consulted.

The staff assigned to the study includes: Robert Holtz, Portland, Oregon, area director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs; James Officer, assistant to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; Rex Quinn, the Bureau's Tribal Relations Officer; William Benge, head of the Bureau's Branch of Law and Order; and Newton Edwards, staff assistant to Assistant Secretary John A. Carver, Jr.