

DOC HASTINGS, WA
CHAIRMAN
DON YOUNG, AK
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TN
LOUIE GOHMERT, TX
ROB BISHOP, UT
DOUG LAMBORN, CO
ROBERT J. WITTMAN, VA
PAUL C. BROUN, GA
JOHN FLEMING, LA
MIKE COFFMAN, CO
TOM McCLINTOCK, CA
GLENN THOMPSON, PA
JEFF DENHAM, CA
DAN BENISHEK, MI
DAVID RIVERA, FL
JEFF DUNCAN, SC
SCOTT R. TIPTON, CO
PAUL A. GOSAR, AZ
RAÚL R. LABRADOR, ID
KRISTI L. NOEM, SD
STEVE SOUTHERLAND II, FL
BILL FLORES, TX
ANDY HARRIS, MD
JEFFREY M. LANDRY, LA
JON RUNYAN, NJ
BILL JOHNSON, OH
MARK AMODEI, NV

TODD YOUNG
CHIEF OF STAFF

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

EDWARD J. MARKEY, MA
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER
DALE E. KILDEE, MI
PETER A. DeFAZIO, OR
ENI F.H. FALCOMAVEGA, AS
FRANK PALLONE, JR., NJ
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, CA
RUSH D. HOLT, NJ
RAUL M. GRIJALVA, AZ
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, GU
JIM COSTA, CA
DAN BOREN, OK
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN, CNMI
MARTIN HEINRICH, NM
BEN RAY LUJÁN, NM
JOHN P. SARBANES, MD
BETTY SUTTON, OH
NIKI TSONGAS, MA
PEDRO R. PIERLUISI, PR
JOHN GARAMENDI, CA
COLLEEN W. HANABUSA, HI
PAUL TONKO, NY

JEFFREY DUNCAN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

Opening Statement of
The Honorable Don Young of Alaska
Chairman, Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs
At the Oversight Hearing on
"Indian lands: exploring resolutions to disputes concerning Indian tribes, state and local governments, and private landowners over land use and development"
Thursday, August 2, 2012, at 2:00 p.m.

Placing land in trust for tribes is one of the most solemn actions the federal government takes regarding American Indians. For this reason, it is imperative for the Subcommittee to obtain a clear understanding of the laws and policies concerning when, where, and under what process fee lands should be acquired in trust.

Today the Committee is going to hear from tribal leaders and a private landowner concerning two separate disputes. The two cases highlight challenges facing tribes and non-tribal interests trying to resolve disagreements over creating new trust land areas outside existing Indian reservations.

As the Subcommittee examines these cases, a question we may wish to consider is whether current law is adequate for these controversies to be settled without intervention of the Congress or the Department of the Interior.

The two cases before us today involve the Navajo and Zuni tribes negotiating over the division of the Fort Wingate Army depot, which was closed under the Base Realignment and Closure Act process ... and the Chumash Indians and non-tribal landowners in the Santa Ynez Valley, where the Chumash tribal government wishes to increase its trust land base over which to exercise sovereignty.

Leading off the hearing will be the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, who will give us an overview of the agency's fee-to-trust process, and a status update on the Fort Wingate lands. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses today and now recognize the Ranking Member for any opening statement he may have.