

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1634

Congratulating Taos Pueblo, its leaders and its people, on the 40th
Anniversary of the return of their sacred Blue Lake lands.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

Mr. LUJÁN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Natural Resources

RESOLUTION

Congratulating Taos Pueblo, its leaders and its people, on
the 40th Anniversary of the return of their sacred Blue
Lake lands.

Whereas Taos Pueblo Indians have occupied their present
homeland in northern New Mexico since time immemo-
rial, and their central village there is the oldest continu-
ously inhabited structure in North America;

Whereas Spanish rule was established over the Taos Pueblo
territory in 1598 under laws recognizing Indian
possessory rights; Mexico occupied and assumed sov-
ereignty over the territory in 1821, confirming Indian
possessory rights; and, in 1848, sovereignty over the ter-
ritory passed to the United States under the Treaty of
Guadalupe Hidalgo, which guaranteed protection of all
property rights recognized by Spanish and Mexican law;

Whereas, nevertheless, in 1906, illegally and without the consent of Taos Pueblo, the United States Government appropriated the Pueblo's sacred Blue Lake lands and made them a part of Carson National Forest, a serious threat to and interference with the free and unmolested practice of their religion by the people of Taos Pueblo;

Whereas Taos Pueblo began at once after this illegal taking a long and courageous and, at the time, seemingly hopeless struggle to regain title to these lands, sacred to them and an integral part of their cultural and religious life;

Whereas, in 1965, the United States Indian Claims Commission affirmed that the United States Government had unjustly taken Taos Pueblo's Blue Lake lands and preparations were made to compensate the Pueblo in money for the illegal taking, a move which the Pueblo rejected, still demanding, instead, a return of the lands themselves;

Whereas because of the steadfast efforts of the Taos Pueblo leaders and people through the years, their unanswerable moral and religious arguments, and their principled refusal to accept nothing short of return of the Blue Lake lands, more and more American organizations and leaders, public and private, began to join in the Blue Lake cause and to take to heart the words of the great old Cacique of Taos Pueblo at the time, the late Juan de Jesus Romeo: "Our Blue Lake wilderness keeps our water holy and by this water we are baptized . . . If our land is not returned to us, if it is turned over to the government for their use, then it is the end of Indian life. Our people will scatter as the people of other nations have scattered. It is our religion that holds us together"; and

Whereas almost unbelievably and against all odds, because of their own unyielding fight and because their cause was

just, the people of Taos Pueblo finally won out, and legislation returning 48,000 acres of their sacred Blue Lake lands to them cleared its last congressional hurdle and passed the Senate in December 1970 and, the same month, was signed into law by the President of the United States, who said at the time: “This bill indicates a new direction in Indian affairs in this country . . . in which there will be more of an attitude of cooperation rather than paternalism, one of self-determination rather than termination, one of mutual respect”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) congratulates Taos Pueblo, its leaders, and
3 its people, on the 40th Anniversary of the return of
4 their sacred Blue Lake lands;

5 (2) recognizes the long and courageous struggle
6 of the Taos Pueblo leaders and people through the
7 years that brought about this ultimate and greatly
8 important success; and

9 (3) encourages the observation of this anniver-
10 sary, so important to Taos Pueblo as well as to all
11 American Indians and tribes, with appropriate cere-
12 monies and activities.

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