

## PART B—MICCOSUKEE SETTLEMENT

## § 1750. Congressional findings

Congress finds that:

(1) There is pending before the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida a lawsuit by the Miccosukee Tribe that involves the taking of certain tribal lands in connection with the construction of highway Interstate 75 by the Florida Department of Transportation.

(2) The pendency of the lawsuit referred to in paragraph (1) clouds title of certain lands used in the maintenance and operation of the highway and hinders proper planning for future maintenance and operations.

(3) The Florida Department of Transportation, with the concurrence of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvements Trust Fund of the State of Florida, and the Miccosukee Tribe have executed an agreement for the purpose of resolving the dispute and settling the lawsuit.

(4) The agreement referred to in paragraph (3) requires the consent of Congress in connection with contemplated land transfers.

(5) The Settlement Agreement is in the interest of the Miccosukee Tribe, as the Tribe will receive certain monetary payments, new reservation lands to be held in trust by the United States, and other benefits.

(6) Land received by the United States pursuant to the Settlement Agreement is in consideration of Miccosukee Indian Reservation lands lost by the Miccosukee Tribe by virtue of transfer to the Florida Department of Transportation under the Settlement Agreement.

(7) The lands referred to in paragraph (6) as received by the United States will be held in trust by the United States for the use and benefit of the Miccosukee Tribe as Miccosukee Indian Reservation lands in compensation for the consideration given by the Tribe in the Settlement Agreement.

(8) Congress shares with the parties to the Settlement Agreement a desire to resolve the dispute and settle the lawsuit.

(Pub. L. 105-83, title VII, §702, Nov. 14, 1997, 111 Stat. 1624.)

## SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 105-83, title VII, §701, Nov. 14, 1997, 111 Stat. 1624, provided that: "This title [enacting this part] may be cited as the 'Miccosukee Settlement Act of 1997'."

## § 1750a. Definitions

In this part:

## (1) Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvements Trust Fund

The term "Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvements Trust Fund" means the agency of the State of Florida holding legal title to and responsible for trust administration of certain lands of the State of Florida, consisting of the Governor, Attorney General, Commissioner of Agriculture, Commissioner of Education, Controller, Secretary of State, and Treasurer of the State of Florida, who are Trustees of the Board.

## (2) Florida Department of Transportation

The term "Florida Department of Transportation" means the executive branch department and agency of the State of Florida that—

(A) is responsible for the construction and maintenance of surface vehicle roads, existing pursuant to section 20.23, Florida Statutes; and

(B) has the authority to execute the Settlement Agreement pursuant to section 334.044, Florida Statutes.

## (3) Lawsuit

The term "lawsuit" means the action in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida, entitled *Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida v. State of Florida and Florida Department of Transportation, et al.*, docket No. 6285-Civ-Paine.

## (4) Miccosukee lands

The term "Miccosukee lands" means lands that are—

(A) held in trust by the United States for the use and benefit of the Miccosukee Tribe as Miccosukee Indian Reservation lands; and

(B) identified pursuant to the Settlement Agreement for transfer to the Florida Department of Transportation.

## (5) Miccosukee Tribe; Tribe

The terms "Miccosukee Tribe" and "Tribe" mean the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, a tribe of American Indians recognized by the United States and organized under section 476 of this title and recognized by the State of Florida pursuant to chapter 285, Florida Statutes.

## (6) Secretary

The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

## (7) Settlement Agreement; Agreement

The terms "Settlement Agreement" and "Agreement" mean the assemblage of documents entitled "Settlement Agreement" (with incorporated exhibits) that—

(A) addresses the lawsuit; and

(B)(i) was signed on August 28, 1996, by Ben G. Watts (Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation) and Billy Cypress (Chairman of the Miccosukee Tribe); and

(ii) after being signed, as described in clause (i), was concurred in by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvements Trust Fund of the State of Florida.

## (8) State of Florida

The term "State of Florida" means—

(A) all agencies or departments of the State of Florida, including the Florida Department of Transportation and the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvements Trust Fund; and

(B) the State of Florida as a governmental entity.

(Pub. L. 105-83, title VII, §703, Nov. 14, 1997, 111 Stat. 1624.)

## § 1750b. Ratification

The United States approves, ratifies, and confirms the Settlement Agreement.

(Pub. L. 105-83, title VII, §704, Nov. 14, 1997, 111 Stat. 1625.)

**§ 1750c. Authority of Secretary**

As Trustee for the Miccosukee Tribe, the Secretary shall—

(1)(A) aid and assist in the fulfillment of the Settlement Agreement at all times and in a reasonable manner; and

(B) to accomplish the fulfillment of the Settlement Agreement in accordance with subparagraph (A), cooperate with and assist the Miccosukee Tribe;

(2) upon finding that the Settlement Agreement is legally sufficient and that the State of Florida has the necessary authority to fulfill the Agreement—

(A) sign the Settlement Agreement on behalf of the United States; and

(B) ensure that an individual other than the Secretary who is a representative of the Bureau of Indian Affairs also signs the Settlement Agreement;

(3) upon finding that all necessary conditions precedent to the transfer of Miccosukee land to the Florida Department of Transportation as provided in the Settlement Agreement have been or will be met so that the Agreement has been or will be fulfilled, but for the execution of that land transfer and related land transfers—

(A) transfer ownership of the Miccosukee land to the Florida Department of Transportation in accordance with the Settlement Agreement, including in the transfer solely and exclusively that Miccosukee land identified in the Settlement Agreement for transfer to the Florida Department of Transportation; and

(B) in conjunction with the land transfer referred to in subparagraph (A), transfer no land other than the land referred to in that subparagraph to the Florida Department of Transportation; and

(4) upon finding that all necessary conditions precedent to the transfer of Florida lands from the State of Florida to the United States have been or will be met so that the Agreement has been or will be fulfilled but for the execution of that land transfer and related land transfers, receive and accept in trust for the use and benefit of the Miccosukee Tribe ownership of all land identified in the Settlement Agreement for transfer to the United States.

(Pub. L. 105-83, title VII, §705, Nov. 14, 1997, 111 Stat. 1625.)

**§ 1750d. Miccosukee Indian Reservation lands**

The lands transferred and held in trust for the Miccosukee Tribe under section 1750c(4) of this title shall be Miccosukee Indian Reservation lands.

(Pub. L. 105-83, title VII, §706, Nov. 14, 1997, 111 Stat. 1626.)

**§ 1750e. Miscellaneous**

**(a) Rule of construction**

Nothing in this part or the Settlement Agreement shall—

(1) affect the eligibility of the Miccosukee Tribe or its members to receive any services or benefits under any program of the Federal Government; or

(2) diminish the trust responsibility of the United States to the Miccosukee Tribe and its members.

**(b) No reductions in payments**

No payment made pursuant to this part or the Settlement Agreement shall result in any reduction or denial of any benefits or services under any program of the Federal Government to the Miccosukee Tribe or its members, with respect to which the Tribe or the members of the Tribe are entitled or eligible because of the status of—

(1) the Miccosukee Tribe as a federally recognized Indian tribe; or

(2) any member of the Miccosukee Tribe as a member of the Tribe.

**(c) Taxation**

**(1) In general**

**(A) Moneys**

None of the moneys paid to the Miccosukee Tribe under this part or the Settlement Agreement shall be taxable under Federal or State law.

**(B) Lands**

None of the lands conveyed to the Miccosukee Tribe under this part or the Settlement Agreement shall be taxable under Federal or State law.

**(2) Payments and conveyances not taxable events**

No payment or conveyance referred to in paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a taxable event.

(Pub. L. 105-83, title VII, §707, Nov. 14, 1997, 111 Stat. 1626.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This part, referred to in text, was in the original “this Act” and was translated as reading “this title”, meaning title VII of Pub. L. 105-83 to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

SUBCHAPTER IV—CONNECTICUT INDIAN LAND CLAIMS SETTLEMENT

**§ 1751. Congressional findings**

The Congress finds that—

(a) there is pending before the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut a civil action entitled “Western Pequot Tribe of Indians against Holdridge Enterprises Incorporated, et al., Civil Action Numbered H76-193 (D. Conn.),” which involves Indian claims to certain public and private lands within the town of Ledyard, Connecticut;

(b) the pendency of this lawsuit has placed a cloud on the titles to much of the land in the town of Ledyard, including lands not involved in the lawsuit, which has resulted in severe economic hardships for the residents of the town;

(c) the Congress shares with the State of Connecticut and the parties to the lawsuit a desire to remove all clouds on titles resulting from such Indian land claims;