



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

**To:** Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs Republican Members  
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**Date:** Monday, June 8, 2026  
**Subject:** Legislative Hearing on 3 Bills

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The Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs will hold a legislative hearing on three bills: H.R. 6917 (Rep. Titus), To take certain land into trust for the benefit of the Las Vegas Tribe of Paiute Indians; H.R. 8473 (Rep. Begich), *“Veterinary Services to Improve Public Health in Rural Communities Act”*; and H.R. 8954 (Rep. Hurd), *“Tribal Regulatory Reform Implementation Act of 2026”*.

The hearing will take place on **Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Seneca Feys ([Seneca.Feys@mail.house.gov](mailto:Seneca.Feys@mail.house.gov)) by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 8, 2026, if their member intends to participate in the hearing.

## **I. KEY MESSAGES**

- The hearing features two bills introduced by Republican members of the House Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) promoting economic development and public safety in Indian Country.
- H.R. 8473 (Rep. Begich) authorizes the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to utilize funds for public health veterinary services directly, or through Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistant Act (ISDEAA) contracts and compacts.
- H.R. 8954 (Rep. Hurd) amends the Indian Tribal Regulatory Reform and Business Development Act of 2000 (Act) to transfer administrative responsibility for the Act’s regulatory reform authority from the U.S. Department of Commerce (Commerce) to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

## **II. WITNESSES**

### **Panel I (Members of Congress):**

- *To Be Announced*

## Panel II (Outside Experts):

- **The Hon. Rodney Butler**, President, Native American Finance Officers Association, Board of Directors, (Chairman, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation), Washington, D.C. [H.R. 8954]
- **Mr. Brian Berube**, Senior Program Manager, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Anchorage, AK [H.R. 8473]
- **The Hon. Benny Tso**, Chairman, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, Las Vegas, Nevada [H.R. 6917] (*Minority Witness*)

## III. BACKGROUND

### [H.R. 6917 \(Rep. Titus\), To take certain land into trust for the benefit of the Las Vegas Tribe of Paiute Indians](#)

H.R. 6917 transfers approximately 3,156 acres of land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) into trust for the Las Vegas Tribe of Paiute Indians (Las Vegas Paiute).

The Las Vegas Paiute is a federally recognized tribe in southern Nevada.<sup>1</sup> The Paiutes are descended from the Nuwuvi people, who originally resided in parts of the Colorado River Basin, including most of southeastern Nevada, as well as parts of southern California and Utah.<sup>2</sup>

The Paiutes have a long history in the Las Vegas area, as many of the Nuwuvi moved to Las Vegas and were employed on the ranches of white settlers. In 1911, the federal government acquired a ten-acre parcel of land in downtown Las Vegas, on the condition that it would be held exclusively for Indian use.<sup>3</sup> This deal formed the Las Vegas Paiute Colony, a designated area for the Paiute people to live and maintain their cultural and community life. 60 years after the initial land acquisition, the Las Vegas Paiute tribal constitution and bylaws were approved and the tribe received federal recognition. Today, the total size of the reservation is approximately 3,850 acres.<sup>4</sup>

The Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (2015 NDAA) included a provision creating the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument in southern Nevada.<sup>5</sup> Unbeknownst to the Las Vegas Paiute, however, the legislation also opened up for development thousands of acres of land adjacent to the tribe’s reservation.<sup>6</sup> To mitigate development-related impacts on the reservation, the tribe worked with the city and the Nevada Congressional delegation to craft an intergovernmental agreement between the tribe and the city, which allowed for development east of the reservation once ancestral lands to its north were added to the reservation.

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<sup>1</sup> 89 Fed. Reg. 944.

<sup>2</sup> “History and Culture,” Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, accessed April 29, 2026, [www.lvpaiutetribe.com/history](http://www.lvpaiutetribe.com/history).

<sup>3</sup> Tiller, Veronica E. Velarde, TILLER’S GUIDE TO INDIAN COUNTRY: ECONOMIC PROFILES OF AMERICAN INDIAN RESERVATIONS, (3rd ed. 2006), pg. 509.

<sup>4</sup> Tiller, Veronica E. Velarde, TILLER’S GUIDE TO INDIAN COUNTRY: ECONOMIC PROFILES OF AMERICAN INDIAN RESERVATIONS, (3rd ed. 2006), pg. 509 & 510.

<sup>5</sup> Pub. L. No. 113–291.

<sup>6</sup> One Pager provided to Subcommittee staff by the Las Vegas Paiute Indians. On file.

H.R. 6917 codifies the portion of the agreement relating to the reservation’s expansion.<sup>7</sup> The legislation places 3,156 acres of BLM-administered land north of the reservation into trust for the Paiute Indians. The land cannot be used for gaming, and existing water rights remain in place. Additionally, the legislation requires the tribe to grant a 300-foot-wide right-of-way to a qualified electric utility company for the construction and maintenance of high-voltage transmission facilities.<sup>8</sup>

The legislation contains a drafting error that will need to be corrected. As currently drafted, the bill repeals all of Section 3092 of the 2015 NDAA. The Committee understands that the bill’s sponsor intended only Section 3092(a)(4)(D) of the 2015 NDAA to be struck.

### **H.R. 8473 (Rep. Begich), “Veterinary Services to Improve Public Health in Rural Communities Act”**

H.R. 8473, introduced by Representative Nick Begich (R-AK-At Large), authorizes the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Indian Health Service (IHS), to utilize funds for public health veterinary services via direct expenditure or through Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistant Act (ISDEAA) contracts and compacts.

Rural residents, including those living in Indian Country, experience higher rates of exposure to rabies and other animal-transmitted diseases, due in part to the insufficient availability of veterinary services.<sup>9</sup> Without reliable and consistent veterinary care, tribal communities run a higher risk of contracting zoonotic disease and animal-related injuries.<sup>10</sup> For example, from 2019 to 2024, roughly 24,000 patients received ambulatory care for dog bites across IHS service areas.<sup>11</sup> The Alaska, Great Plains, Navajo, and Phoenix Areas have the highest number of dog bite-related hospitalizations.<sup>12</sup> IHS does not currently have the authority to provide care or funding for zoonotic or veterinary services, despite the services’ effectiveness in reducing the risk of disease transmission and injury to the general public.<sup>13</sup>

H.R. 8473 authorizes HHS to use funds for public health veterinary services, thereby extending IHS coverage to address zoonotic diseases. Additionally, the legislation amends Section 224 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to enhance coordination with the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in providing public health veterinary services. The legislation also requires HHS to submit a biennial report to Congress detailing the use of funds, the stationing and allocation of USPHS-commissioned staff, and data on zoonotic diseases and other related

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<sup>7</sup> For the larger legislation which includes provisions from H.R. 6917, see H.R. 2134, 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/2134>.

<sup>8</sup> H.R. 6917, 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/119/bills/hr6917/BILLS-119hr6917ih.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> “Facts about Diseases that Can Spread Between Animals and People,” U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 26, 2026, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-pets/diseases/index.html>.

<sup>10</sup> S. Rept. 119-69.

<sup>11</sup> Testimony of Melanie Egorin, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, 118<sup>th</sup> Congress Legislative Hearing on July 10, 2024, <https://www.indian.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/07-10-2024-Egorin-Testimony.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Testimony of Brian Lefferts, Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, 118<sup>th</sup> Congress Legislative Hearing on July 10, 2024, <https://www.indian.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/07-10-2024-Lefferts-Testimony.pdf>.

services. USDA must also conduct a feasibility study on the delivery of oral rabies vaccines for rabies-susceptible wildlife in Arctic regions of the United States connected to the transmission of rabies to Tribal members.

### **H.R. 8954 (Rep. Hurd), “Tribal Regulatory Reform Implementation Act of 2026”**

H.R. 8954, introduced by Representative Jeff Hurd (R-CO-03), amends the Indian Tribal Regulatory Reform and Business Development Act of 2000 (Act) to transfer administrative responsibility for the Act’s regulatory reform authority from the U.S. Department of Commerce (Commerce) to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

American Indians on reservations experience poverty at rates twice that of the national poverty average,<sup>14</sup> as well as substandard housing and high unemployment rates.<sup>15</sup> Limited economic opportunities, systemic barriers, and inadequate infrastructure contribute to these challenges.<sup>16</sup> The Indian Tribal Regulatory Reform and Business Development Act of 2000<sup>17</sup> was enacted in response to tribal leaders, congressional leadership, and previous administrations seeking to diversify and thereby improve tribal economies. Under the law, the Secretary of Commerce was directed to create a 21-member Authority to identify and help remove federal barriers to investment, business development, and wealth creation in Native American communities.<sup>18</sup> The Authority was established within Commerce, with support from DOI and other appropriate federal officials.

In the intervening years since the law’s enactment, however, the situation has changed. Today, DOI plays a central role in Indian affairs, promoting tribal economic development, and administering federal programs affecting Indian Country. Today, supporters of the program and proponents of the legislation assert DOI is better suited than Commerce to be leading an Authority dedicated to tribal economic development. Accordingly, H.R. 8954 amends the Indian Tribal Regulatory Reform and Business Development Act of 2000 to transfer all administrative responsibilities and jurisdiction to the Secretary of the Interior.

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<sup>14</sup> Nicole Stern & Lisa I. Iezzoni, “Poor housing harms health in American Indian and Alaska Native communities”, Harvard Health Publishing, April 6, 2022, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/poor-housing-harms-health-in-american-indian-and-alaska-native-communities-202204062721>.

<sup>15</sup> Vernon Brundage Jr., “A profile of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the U.S. labor force,” Monthly Labor Review, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, November 2023, <https://doi.org/10.21916/mlr.2023.28>.

<sup>16</sup> “Life on Native American Reservations: Challenges, Resilience & Progress,” Running Strong for Native American Youth, accessed May 29, 2026. <https://indianyouth.org/life-in-native-american-reservations/>

<sup>17</sup> Public L. No. 106-447.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

## IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & SECTION-BY-SECTION

### [H.R. 6917 \(Rep. Titus\), To take certain land into trust for the benefit of the Las Vegas Tribe of Paiute Indians](#)

#### **Sec 1. Transfer of Land to be Held in Trust for the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe.**

- Places roughly 3,156 acres of land into trust for the Las Vegas Tribe of Paiute Indians.
- Directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a land survey to determine the boundaries of the land taken into trust.
- Requires that, not later than 30 days after enactment, an approximately 300-foot-wide right-of-way be granted by the tribe to a qualified electric utility for the construction and maintenance of high-voltage transmission facilities.
- Prohibits gaming on the transferred land, pursuant to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.
- State water rights shall remain the same on the land taken into trust.

### [H.R. 8473 \(Rep. Begich\), “Veterinary Services to Improve Public Health in Rural Communities Act”](#)

#### **Sec 3. Public Health Veterinary Services**

- Adds a new section to Pub. L. No. 94-437 to list spaying and neutering services for domestic animals, diagnoses, surveillance, epidemiology, control, prevention, elimination, and vaccination as public health veterinary services.
- Enables ISDEAA contracts and compacts to prevent, control, and reduce the transmission of zoonotic diseases in IHS Service areas.
- Allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to assign and deploy the USPHS, and coordinate with the CDC and USDA for public health veterinary services.
- Requires a biennial report to Congress on program implementation.

#### **Sec. 4. Aphis Wildlife Services Study on Oral Rabies Vaccines in Arctic Regions of the United States.**

- The Secretary of Agriculture shall conduct a feasibility study on the delivery of oral rabies vaccines to wildlife in arctic regions of the U.S.

#### **Sec. 5. One Health Framework**

- Amends Pub. L. No. 117-328 to include the Director of the IHS in the development of a federal One Health framework under law.

### [H.R. 8954 \(Rep. Hurd\), “Tribal Regulatory Reform Implementation Act of 2026”](#)

#### **Sec 2. Transfer of Administrative Responsibilities.**

- Amends Section 4(a) of the Indian Tribal Regulatory Reform and Business Development Act of 2000 by transferring all administrative responsibilities and jurisdiction under the law to the Secretary of the Interior.

## **V. CBO COST ESTIMATE**

A formal cost estimate from CBO is not yet available for these bills.

## **VI. ADMINISTRATION POSITION**

The Trump administration's position on these bills is unknown at this time.

## **VII. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)**

[H.R. 6917](#)

[H.R. 8473](#)

[H.R. 8954](#)