

REFERENCE TITLE: tribal homelands; federal government

State of Arizona  
House of Representatives  
Fifty-fifth Legislature  
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2022

## **HCR 2023**

Introduced by  
Representatives Blackwater-Nygren: Bolding, Cano, Epstein, Espinoza,  
Jermaine, Longdon, Pawlik, Shah, Tsosie, Senators Hatathlie, Stahl  
Hamilton

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT AND  
RESTORE TRIBAL HOMELANDS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1           Whereas, the federal government, primarily under the United States  
2 Department of the Interior, is responsible for carrying out duties that  
3 are critical to the ability of tribal governments to manage their own  
4 homelands; and

5           Whereas, the United States Department of the Interior maintains a  
6 relationship with nearly 600 federally recognized tribal nations and  
7 manages, oversees or guides policy on the use of 500 million acres of  
8 federal and tribal land; and

9           Whereas, historical actions of the United States government, such as  
10 the long-defunct General Allotment Act, broke tribal lands into parcels,  
11 apportioned plots of land to individual tribal members and sold the  
12 remaining parcels to the public. This erosion of the land base of Native  
13 American tribes across the nation continues to negatively impact tribes in  
14 many ways, including impeding tribal economic development, cultural  
15 preservation, housing availability and public safety; and

16           Whereas, before the General Allotment Act, Native American tribes  
17 controlled more than 150 million acres of land, but by 1934 the United  
18 States government had sold more than 90 million acres of tribal land to  
19 settlers without compensating the tribes. Since implementing the Indian  
20 Reorganization Act of 1934, only eight percent of this land has been  
21 recovered by tribes; and

22           Whereas, if allowed to persist, the negative impacts of past and  
23 current policies affecting tribal homelands will continue to affect the  
24 well-being of Native Americans and perpetuate disunity in the relationship  
25 between the United States government and tribal governments; and

26           Whereas, under the leadership of Secretary Deb Haaland, a member of  
27 the Pueblo of Laguna, and Undersecretary for Indian Affairs, Bryan  
28 Newland, an Ojibwe citizen of the Bay Mills Indian Community, the United  
29 States Department of the Interior is working with tribal governments to  
30 protect and restore tribal homelands and to empower tribes in managing  
31 Indian lands by addressing the obstacles that impact tribal management of  
32 their homelands; and

33           Whereas, specifically, the Department of the Interior initiative is  
34 focused on three specific areas: the land-into-trust process, leasing and  
35 rights-of-way and sacred sites and treaty rights. These areas of focus  
36 present opportunities for tribes to improve housing for tribal members, to  
37 generate additional energy on their lands, to facilitate the use and sale  
38 of natural resources for the benefit of the tribes, to protect tribal  
39 cultures and ways of life and to ensure tribal sovereignty and  
40 self-determination; and

41           Whereas, the focus on the land-into-trust process enables tribes to  
42 reacquire lands proximate to or within their reservations to secure and  
43 consolidate a land base for tribal communities to thrive by localizing  
44 decision-making at the regional level, alleviating bottlenecks, reducing  
45 complexity and accelerating the land-into-trust process; and

1           Whereas, leasing and rights-of-way are vital in protecting the  
2 interests of tribes and tribal landowners, clarifying taxing authority and  
3 furthering economic development on tribal lands; and

4           Whereas, sacred sites and treaty rights are important in providing  
5 religious freedom by protecting places sacred to Native American people  
6 and enabling access to those sacred sites for the free exercise of  
7 religious rights and off-reservation treaty rights; and

8           Whereas, additional efforts by the federal government include  
9 commitments by the United States Department of Agriculture and the United  
10 States Department of the Interior to increase opportunities for tribes to  
11 manage and participate as co-stewards in such areas as fire management on  
12 Indian lands, streamlining the rights-of-way process for  
13 telecommunications projects on tribal lands and executing specific  
14 long-overdue transfers of land to tribes; and

15           Whereas, the United States Department of the Interior is playing a  
16 leading role in a larger initiative by the federal government to bring  
17 honor and trust to the relationships between the United States and tribal  
18 governments by upholding the federal government's treaty promises to the  
19 tribes. In doing so, the federal government can commit to collaborating  
20 with tribes to protect their lands and ensure that each tribe has a  
21 homeland where its citizens can live together and lead safe and fulfilling  
22 lives.

23 Therefore

24 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona,  
25 the Senate concurring:

26           That the Members of the Legislature affirm their support of  
27 initiatives led by the United States Department of the Interior to restore  
28 tribal homelands and to empower tribal governments to better manage Indian  
29 lands.