

Public Law 109–47
109th Congress

An Act

To correct the south boundary of the Colorado River Indian Reservation in Arizona,
and for other purposes.

Aug. 2, 2005
[H.R. 794]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

Colorado River
Indian
Reservation
Boundary
Correction Act.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE, FINDINGS, PURPOSES.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the “Colorado River Indian Reservation Boundary Correction Act”.

(b) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Act of March 3, 1865, created the Colorado River Indian Reservation (hereinafter “Reservation”) along the Colorado River in Arizona and California for the “Indians of said river and its tributaries”.

(2) In 1873 and 1874, President Grant issued Executive Orders to expand the Reservation southward and to secure its southern boundary at a clearly recognizable geographic location in order to forestall non-Indian encroachment and conflicts with the Indians of the Reservation.

(3) In 1875, Mr. Chandler Robbins surveyed the Reservation (hereinafter “the Robbins Survey”) and delineated its new southern boundary, which included approximately 16,000 additional acres (hereinafter “the La Paz lands”), as part of the Reservation.

(4) On May 15, 1876, President Grant issued an Executive Order that established the Reservation’s boundaries as those delineated by the Robbins Survey.

(5) In 1907, as a result of increasingly frequent trespasses by miners and cattle and at the request of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the General Land Office of the United States provided for a resurvey of the southern and southeastern areas of the Reservation.

(6) In 1914, the General Land Office accepted and approved a resurvey of the Reservation conducted by Mr. Guy Harrington in 1912 (hereinafter the “Harrington Resurvey”) which confirmed the boundaries that were delineated by the Robbins Survey and established by Executive Order in 1876.

(7) On November 19, 1915, the Secretary of the Interior reversed the decision of the General Land Office to accept the Harrington Resurvey, and upon his recommendation on November 22, 1915, President Wilson issued Executive Order No. 2273 “. . . to correct the error in location said southern boundary line . . .”—and thus effectively excluded the La Paz lands from the Reservation.

(8) Historical evidence compiled by the Department of the Interior supports the conclusion that the reason given by the Secretary in recommending that the President issue the 1915 Executive Order—“to correct an error in locating the southern boundary”—was itself in error and that the La Paz lands should not have been excluded from the Reservation.

(9) The La Paz lands continue to hold cultural and historical significance, as well as economic development potential, for the Colorado River Indian tribes, who have consistently sought to have such lands restored to their Reservation.

(c) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are:

(1) To correct the south boundary of the Reservation by reestablishing such boundary as it was delineated by the Robbins Survey and affirmed by the Harrington Resurvey.

(2) To restore the La Paz lands to the Reservation, subject to valid existing rights under Federal law and to provide for continued reasonable public access for recreational purposes.

(3) To provide for the Secretary of the Interior to review and ensure that the corrected Reservation boundary is resurveyed and marked in conformance with the public system of surveys extended over such lands.

SEC. 2. BOUNDARY CORRECTION, RESTORATION, DESCRIPTION.

(a) BOUNDARY.—The boundaries of the Colorado River Indian Reservation are hereby declared to include those boundaries as were delineated by the Robbins Survey, affirmed by the Harrington Survey, and described as follows: The approximately 15,375 acres of Federal land described as “Lands Identified for Transfer to Colorado River Indian Tribes” on the map prepared by the Bureau of Land Management entitled “Colorado River Indian Reservation Boundary Correction Act, and dated January 4, 2005”, (hereinafter referred to as the “Map”).

(b) MAP.—The Map shall be available for review at the Bureau of Land Management.

(c) RESTORATION.—Subject to valid existing rights under Federal law, all right, title, and interest of the United States to those lands within the boundaries declared in subsection (a) that were excluded from the Colorado River Indian Reservation pursuant to Executive Order No. 2273 (November 22, 1915) are hereby restored to the Reservation and shall be held in trust by the United States on behalf of the Colorado River Indian Tribes.

(d) EXCLUSION.—Excluded from the lands restored to trust status on behalf of the Colorado River Indian Tribes that are described in subsection (a) are 2 parcels of Arizona State Lands identified on the Map as “State Lands” and totaling 320 acres and 520 acres.

SEC. 3. RESURVEY AND MARKING.

The Secretary of the Interior shall ensure that the boundary for the restored lands described in section 2(a) is surveyed and clearly marked in conformance with the public system of surveys extended over such lands.

SEC. 4. WATER RIGHTS.

The restored lands described in section 2(a) and shown on the Map shall have no Federal reserve water rights to surface water or ground water from any source.

SEC. 5. PUBLIC ACCESS.

Continued access to the restored lands described in section (2)(a) for hunting and other existing recreational purposes shall remain available to the public under reasonable rules and regulations promulgated by the Colorado River Indian Tribes.

SEC. 6. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The restored lands described in section (2)(a) shall be subject to all rights-of-way, easements, leases, and mining claims existing on the date of the enactment of this Act. The United States reserves the right to continue all Reclamation projects, including the right to access and remove mineral materials for Colorado River maintenance on the restored lands described in section (2)(a).

(b) **ADDITIONAL RIGHTS-OF-WAY.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary, in consultation with the Tribe, shall grant additional rights-of-way, expansions, or renewals of existing rights-of-way for roads, utilities, and other accommodations to adjoining landowners or existing right-of-way holders, or their successors and assigns, if—

(1) the proposed right-of-way is necessary to the needs of the applicant;

(2) the proposed right-of-way acquisition will not cause significant and substantial harm to the Colorado River Indian Tribes; and

(3) the proposed right-of-way complies with the procedures in part 169 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations consistent with this subsection and other generally applicable Federal laws unrelated to the acquisition of interests on trust lands, except that section 169.3 of those regulations shall not be applicable to expansions or renewals of existing rights-of-way for roads and utilities.

(c) **FEES.**—The fees charged for the renewal of any valid lease, easement, or right-of-way subject to this section shall not be greater than the current Federal rate for such a lease, easement, or right-of-way at the time of renewal if the holder has been in substantial compliance with all terms of the lease, easement, or right-of-way.

SEC. 7. GAMING.

Land taken into trust under this Act shall neither be considered to have been taken into trust for gaming nor be used for gaming

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(as that term is used in the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.)).

Approved August 2, 2005.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 794:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 151 (2005):

April 12, considered and passed House.

July 26, considered and passed Senate.