

THE RANCHERIA ACT  
Public Law 85-671  
as amended August 11, 1964

AN ACT

To provide for the distribution of the land and assets of certain Indian rancherias and reservations in California, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the lands, including minerals, water rights, and improvements located on the lands, and other assets of the rancherias and reservations lying wholly within the State of California shall be distributed in accordance with the provisions of this Act when such distribution is requested by a majority vote of the adult Indians of a rancheria or reservation or of the adult Indians who hold formal or informal assignments on the rancheria or reservation, as determined by the Secretary of the Interior. The requirement for a majority vote shall not apply to the rancherias and reservations that were at any time named in this section.

Section 2. (a) When the Indians of a rancheria or reservation request a distribution of assets in accordance with the provisions of this Act, they, or the Secretary of the Interior after consultation with them, shall prepare a plan for distributing to individual Indians the assets of the reservation or rancheria, including the assigned and the unassigned lands, or for selling such assets and distributing the proceeds of sale, or for conveying such assets to a corporation or other legal entity organized or designated by the group, or for conveying such assets to the group as tenants in common: Provided, That the provisions of this section with

respect to a request for distribution of assets shall not apply to any case in which the requirement for such request is waived by section 1 of this Act, and in any such case the plan shall be prepared as though request therefor had been made. The Secretary shall provide such assistance to the Indians as is necessary to organize a corporation or other legal entity for the purposes of this Act.

(b) General notice shall be given of the contents of a plan prepared pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and approved by the Secretary, and any Indian who feels that he is unfairly treated in the proposed distribution of the property shall be given an opportunity to present his views and arguments for the consideration of the Secretary. After such consideration, the plan or a revision thereof shall be submitted for the approval of the adult Indians who will participate in the distribution of the property, and if the plan is approved by a majority of such Indians who vote in a referendum called for that purpose by the Secretary the plan shall be carried out: Provided, That the provisions of such plan may be modified with the approval of the Secretary and consent of the majority of the distributees. It is the intention of Congress that such plan shall be completed not more than three years after it is approved.

(c) Any grantee under the provisions of this section shall receive an unrestricted title to the property conveyed, and the conveyance shall be recorded in the appropriate county office.

(d) No property distributed under the provisions of this Act shall at the time of distribution be subject to any Federal or State income

tax. Following any distribution of property made under the provisions of this Act, such property and any income derived therefrom by the distributee shall be subject to the same taxes, State and Federal, as in the case of non-Indians: Provided, That for the purpose of capital gains or losses the base value of the property shall be the value of the property when distributed to the individual, corporation, or other legal entity.

Section 3. Before making the conveyances authorized by this Act on any rancheria or reservation, the Secretary of the Interior is directed:

(a) To cause surveys to be made of the exterior or interior boundaries of the lands to the extent that such surveys are necessary or appropriate for the conveyance of marketable and recordable titles to the lands.

(b) To complete any construction or improvement required to bring Indian Bureau roads serving the rancherias or reservations up to adequate standards comparable to standards for similar roads of the State or subdivision thereof. The Secretary is authorized to contract with the State of California or political subdivisions thereof for the construction or improvement of such roads and to expend under such contracts moneys appropriated by Congress for the Indian road system. When such roads are transferred to the State or local government the Secretary is authorized to convey rights-of-way for such roads, including any improvements thereon.

(c) To construct, improve, install, extend, or otherwise provide, by contract or otherwise, sanitation facilities (including domestic and community water supplies and facilities, drainage facilities, and sewage- and waste-disposal facilities, together with necessary appurtenances and



fixtures) and irrigation facilities for Indian homes, communities, and lands, as he and the Indians agree, within a reasonable time, should be completed by the United States: Provided, That with respect to sanitation facilities, as hereinbefore described, the functions specified in this paragraph, including agreements with Indians with respect to such facilities, shall be performed by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in accordance with the provisions of section 7 of the Act of August 4, 1954 (58 Stat. 674), as amended (42 U.S.C. 2004a).

(d) To cancel all reimbursable indebtedness owing to the United States on account of unpaid construction, operation and maintenance charges for water facilities on the reservation or rancheria.

(e) To exchange any lands within the rancheria or reservation that are held by the United States for the use of Indians which the Secretary and the Indians affected agree should be exchanged before the termination of the Federal trust for lands and improvements of approximately equal value.

Section 4. Nothing in this Act shall abrogate any water right that exists by virtue of the laws of the United States. To the extent that the laws of the State of California are not now applicable to any water right appurtenant to any lands involved herein they shall continue to be inapplicable while the water right is in Indian ownership for a period not to exceed fifteen years after the conveyance pursuant to this Act of an unrestricted title thereto, and thereafter the applicability of such laws shall be without prejudice to the priority of any such right not theretofore based upon State law. During the time such State law is not applicable the Attorney General shall represent the Indian owner in all

legal proceedings, including proceedings before administrative bodies, involving such water right, and in any necessary affirmative action to prevent adverse appropriation of water which would encroach upon the Indian water right.

Section 5. (a) The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to convey without consideration to Indians who receive conveyances of land pursuant to this Act, or to a corporation or other legal entity organized by such Indians, or to a public or nonprofit body, any federally owned property on the reservations or rancherias subject to this Act that is not needed for the administration of Indian affairs in California.

(b) For the purposes of this Act, the assets of the Upper Lake Rancheria and the Robinson Rancheria shall include the one-hundred-and-sixty-acre tract set aside as a wood reserve for the Upper Lake Indians by secretarial order dated February 15, 1907.

(c) The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to sell the five hundred and sixty acres of land, more or less, which were withdrawn from entry, sale, or other disposition, and set aside for the Indians of Indian Ranch, Inyo County, California, by the Act of March 3, 1928 (45 Stat. 162), and to distribute the proceeds of sale among the heirs of George Hanson.

(d) Any rancheria or reservation lying wholly within the State of California that is held by the United States for the use of Indians of California and that was not occupied on January 1, 1964, by Indians under a formal or informal assignment shall be sold by the Secretary of the Interior and the proceeds of the sale shall be deposited in the Treasury of the United States to the credit of the Indians of California.

help the Indians to earn a livelihood, to conduct their own affairs, and to assume their responsibilities as citizens without special services because of their status as Indians. Such program may include language training, orientation in non-Indian community customs and living standards, vocational training and related subjects, transportation to the place of training or instruction, and subsistence during the course of training or instruction. For the purposes of such program, the Secretary is authorized to enter into contracts or agreements, with any Federal, State, or local governmental agency, corporation, association, or person. Nothing in this section shall preclude any Federal agency from undertaking any other program for the education and training of Indians with funds appropriated to it.

Section 10. (a) The plan for the distribution of the assets of a rancheria or reservation, when approved by the Secretary and by the Indians in a referendum vote as provided in subsection 2(b) of this Act, shall be final, and the distribution of assets pursuant to such plan shall not be the basis for any claim against the United States by an Indian who receives or is denied a part of the assets distributed.

(b) After the assets of a rancheria or reservation have been distributed pursuant to this Act, the Indians who receive any part of such assets, and the dependent members of their immediate families who are not members of any other tribe or band of Indians, shall not be entitled to any of the services performed by the United States for Indians because of their status as Indians, all restrictions and tax exemptions applicable to trust or restricted land or interests therein owned by them are terminated, all statutes of the United



States which affect Indians because of their status as Indians shall be inapplicable to them, and the laws of the several States shall apply to them in the same manner as they apply to other citizens or persons within their jurisdiction. Nothing in this Act, however, shall affect the status of such persons as citizens of the United States. The provisions of this subsection, as amended, shall apply in the case of a distribution of assets made either before or after the amendment of the subsection.

Section 11. The constitution and corporate charter adopted pursuant to the Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. 984), as amended, or any other authority, by any rancheria or reservation subject to this Act shall be revoked by the Secretary of the Interior when a plan is approved by a majority of the adult Indians thereof pursuant to subsection 2(b) of this Act.

Section 12. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to issue such rules and regulations and to execute or approve such conveyancing instruments as he deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section 13. There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.