

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1461

To authorize the Mescalero Apache Tribe to lease adjudicated water rights.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 8, 2011

Mr. PEARCE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To authorize the Mescalero Apache Tribe to lease adjudicated
water rights.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Mescalero Apache
5 Tribe Leasing Authorization Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) **ADJUDICATED WATER RIGHTS.**—The term
9 “adjudicated water rights” means water rights that
10 were adjudicated to the Tribe in *State v. Lewis*, 116
11 N.M. 194, 861 P. 2d 235 (1993).

1 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
2 the Secretary of the Interior.

3 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means the State
4 of New Mexico.

5 (4) TRIBE.—The term “Tribe” means the Mes-
6 calero Apache Tribe.

7 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION TO LEASE ADJUDICATED WATER**
8 **RIGHTS.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provi-
10 sion of law, subject to subsections (b) and (c), the Tribe
11 may lease, enter into a contract with respect to, or other-
12 wise transfer to another party, for another purpose, or to
13 another place of use in the State, all or any portion of
14 the adjudicated water rights.

15 (b) STATE LAW.—In carrying out any action under
16 subsection (a), the Tribe shall comply with all laws (in-
17 cluding regulations) of the State with respect to the leas-
18 ing or transfer of water rights.

19 (c) ALIENATION; MAXIMUM TERM.—

20 (1) ALIENATION.—The Tribe shall not perma-
21 nently alienate any adjudicated water rights.

22 (2) MAXIMUM TERM.—The term of any water
23 use lease, contract, or other agreement under this
24 section (including a renewal of such an agreement)
25 shall be not more than 99 years.

1 (d) LIABILITY.—The Secretary shall not be liable to
2 the Tribe or any other person for any loss or other det-
3 riment resulting from a lease, contract, or other arrange-
4 ment entered into pursuant to this section.

5 (e) PURCHASES OR GRANTS OF LAND FROM INDI-
6 ANS.—The authorization provided by this Act for the leas-
7 ing, contracting, and transfer of the adjudicated water
8 rights shall be considered to satisfy any requirement for
9 authorization of the action by treaty or convention im-
10 posed by section 2116 of the Revised Statutes (25 U.S.C.
11 177).

12 (f) PROHIBITION ON FORFEITURE.—The nonuse of
13 all or any portion of the adjudicated water rights by a
14 lessee or contractor shall not result in the forfeiture, aban-
15 donment, relinquishment, or other loss of all or any por-
16 tion of the adjudicated water rights.

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