

Public Law 97-382  
97th Congress

An Act

Dec. 22, 1982  
[S. 1894]

To permit Indian tribes to enter into certain agreements for the disposition of tribal mineral resources, and for other purposes.

Indian Mineral  
Development  
Act of 1982.  
25 USC 2101  
note.  
Definitions.  
25 USC 2101.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That this Act may be cited as the "Indian Mineral Development Act of 1982".

SEC. 2. For the purposes of this Act, the term—

(1) "Indian" means any individual Indian or Alaska Native who owns land or interests in land the title to which is held in trust by the United States or is subject to a restriction against alienation imposed by the United States;

(2) "Indian tribe" means any Indian tribe, band, nation, pueblo, community, rancheria, colony, or other group which owns land or interests in land title to which is held in trust by the United States or is subject to a restriction against alienation imposed by the United States; and

(3) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

25 USC 2102.

SEC. 3. (a) Any Indian tribe, subject to the approval of the Secretary and any limitation or provision contained in its constitution or charter, may enter into any joint venture, operating, production sharing, service, managerial, lease or other agreement, or any amendment, supplement or other modification of such agreement (hereinafter referred to as a "Minerals Agreement") providing for the exploration for, or extraction, processing, or other development of, oil, gas, uranium, coal, geothermal, or other energy or nonenergy mineral resources (hereinafter referred to as "mineral resources") in which such Indian tribe owns a beneficial or restricted interest, or providing for the sale or other disposition of the production or products of such mineral resources.

(b) Any Indian owning a beneficial or restricted interest in mineral resources may include such resources in a tribal Minerals Agreement subject to the concurrence of the parties and a finding by the Secretary that such participation is in the best interest of the Indian.

Minerals  
Agreement,  
approval or  
disapproval.  
25 USC 2103.

SEC. 4. (a) The Secretary shall approve or disapprove any Minerals Agreement submitted to him for approval within (1) one hundred and eighty days after submission or (2) sixty days after compliance, if required, with section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)) or any other requirement of Federal law, whichever is later. Any party to such an agreement may enforce the provisions of this subsection pursuant to section 1361 of title 28, United States Code.

Enforcement.

(b) In approving or disapproving a Minerals Agreement, the Secretary shall determine if it is in the best interest of the Indian tribe or of any individual Indian who may be party to such agreement and shall consider, among other things, the potential economic return to the tribe; the potential environmental, social, and cultural effects on the tribe; and provisions for resolving disputes that may arise

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between the parties to the agreement: *Provided*, That the Secretary shall not be required to prepare any study regarding environmental, socioeconomic, or cultural effects of the implementation of a Minerals Agreement apart from that which may be required under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).

(c) Not later than thirty days prior to formal approval or disapproval of any Minerals Agreement, the Secretary shall provide written findings forming the basis of his intent to approve or disapprove such agreement to the affected Indian tribe. Notwithstanding any other law, such findings and all projections, studies, data or other information possessed by the Department of the Interior regarding the terms and conditions of the Minerals Agreement, the financial return to the Indian parties thereto, or the extent, nature, value or disposition of the Indian mineral resources, or the production, products or proceeds thereof, shall be held by the Department of the Interior as privileged proprietary information of the affected Indian or Indian tribe.

(d) The authority to disapprove agreements under this section may only be delegated to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs. The decision of the Secretary or, where authority is delegated, of the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, to disapprove a Minerals Agreement shall be deemed a final agency action. The district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction to review the Secretary's disapproval action and shall determine the matter de novo. The burden is on the Secretary to sustain his action.

Delegation of authority.

(e) Where the Secretary has approved a Minerals Agreement in compliance with the provisions of this Act and any other applicable provision of law, the United States shall not be liable for losses sustained by a tribe or individual Indian under such agreement: *Provided*, That the Secretary shall continue to have a trust obligation to ensure that the rights of a tribe or individual Indian are protected in the event of a violation of the terms of any Minerals Agreement by any other party to such agreement: *Provided further*, That nothing in this Act shall absolve the United States from any responsibility to Indians, including those which derive from the trust relationship and from any treaties, Executive orders, or agreement between the United States and any Indian tribe.

Liability.

SEC. 5. (a) the Secretary shall review, within ninety days of enactment of this Act, any existing Minerals Agreement, which does not purport to be a lease, entered into by any Indian tribe and approved by the Secretary after January 1, 1975, but prior to enactment of this Act, to determine if such agreement complies with the purposes of this Act. Such review shall be limited to the terms of the agreement and shall not address questions of the parties' compliance therewith. The Secretary shall notify the affected tribe and other parties to the agreement of any modifications necessary to bring an agreement into compliance with the purposes of this Act. The tribe and other parties to such agreement shall within ninety days after notice make such modifications. If such modifications are not made within ninety days, the provisions of this Act may not be used as a defense in any proceeding challenging the validity of the agreement.

Review.  
25 USC 2104.

(b) The review required by subsection (a) of this section may be performed prior to the promulgation of regulations required under section 8 of this Act and shall not be considered a Federal action

within the meaning of that term in section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).

Limitation.  
25 USC 2105.

SEC. 6. Nothing in this Act shall affect, nor shall any Minerals Agreement approved pursuant to this Act be subject to or limited by, the Act of May 11, 1938 (52 Stat. 347; 25 U.S.C. 396a et seq.), as amended, or any other law authorizing the development or disposition of the mineral resources of an Indian or Indian tribe.

25 USC 2106.

SEC. 7. In carrying out the obligations of the United States, the Secretary shall ensure that upon the request of an Indian tribe or individual Indian and to the extent of his available resources, such tribe or individual Indian shall have available advice, assistance, and information during the negotiation of a Minerals Agreement. The Secretary may fulfill this responsibility either directly through the use of Federal officials and resources or indirectly by providing financial assistance to the Indian tribe or individual Indian to secure independent assistance.

Rules and  
regulations.  
25 USC 2107.

SEC. 8. Within one hundred and eighty days of the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall promulgate rules and regulations to facilitate implementation of this Act. The Secretary shall, to the extent practicable, consult with national and regional Indian organizations and tribes with expertise in mineral development both in the initial formulation of rules and regulations and any future revision or amendment of such rules and regulations. Where there is pending before the Secretary for his approval a Minerals Agreement of the type authorized by section 3 of this Act which was submitted prior to the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall evaluate and approve or disapprove such agreement based upon section 4 of this Act, but shall not withhold or delay such approval or disapproval on the grounds that the rules and regulations implementing this Act have not been promulgated.

25 USC 2108.

SEC. 9. Nothing in this Act shall impair any right of an Indian tribe organized under section 16 or 17 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. 987), as amended, to develop their mineral resources as may be provided in any constitution or charter adopted by such tribe pursuant to that Act.

25 USC 476, 477.

Approved December 22, 1982.

#### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1894:

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SENATE REPORT: No. 97-472 (Comm. on Indian Affairs).

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June 30, considered and passed Senate.

Aug. 17, considered and passed House, amended.

Dec. 8, Senate concurred in House amendment with amendments.

Dec. 10, House concurred in Senate amendments.