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Federal Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act. 1991

Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission

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(Federal) Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act

United States Code Title 25, chapter 19, subchapter II
PL 102-171, 105 Stat. 1143

Cite as: 25 USC 1721 (1991 Amendment)

[Sec. 1721. Congressional findings and declaration of policy]

(Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement

Pub. L. 102-171, Nov. 26, 1991, 105 Stat. 1143, provided that:

``SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

``This Act may be cited as the `Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act'."

``SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF POLICY.

``(a) Findings and Policy.--Congress hereby finds and declares that:

``(1) The Aroostook Band of Micmacs, as represented as of the time of passage of this Act by the Aroostook Micmac Council, is the sole successor in interest, as to lands within the United States, to the aboriginal entity generally known as the Micmac Nation which years ago claimed aboriginal title to certain lands in the State of Maine.

``(2) The Band was not referred to in the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 [25 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.] because historical documentation of the Micmac presence in Maine was not available at that time.

``(3) This documentation does establish the historical presence of Micmacs in Maine and the existence of aboriginal lands in Maine jointly used by the Micmacs and other tribes to which the Micmacs could have asserted aboriginal title but for the extinguishment of all such claims by the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980.

``(4) The Aroostook Band of Micmacs, in both its history and its presence in Maine, is similar to the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and would have received similar treatment under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 if the information available today had been available to Congress and the parties at that time.

``(5) It is now fair and just to afford the Aroostook Band of Micmacs the same settlement provided to the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians for the settlement of that Band's claims, to the extent they would have benefited from inclusion in the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980.

``(6) Since 1820, the State of Maine has provided special services to the Indians residing within its borders, including the members of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs. During this same period,

the United States provided few special services to the Band and repeatedly denied that it had jurisdiction over or responsibility for the Indian groups in Maine. In view of this provision of special services by the State of Maine, requiring substantial expenditures by the State of Maine and made by the State of Maine without being required to do so by Federal law, it is the intent of Congress that the State of Maine not be required further to contribute directly to this settlement.

“(b) Purpose.--It is the purpose of this Act to--

“(1) provide Federal recognition of the Band;

“(2) provide to the members of the Band the services which the United States provides to Indians because of their status as Indians; and

“(3) place \$900,000 in a land acquisition fund and property tax fund for the future use of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs; and

“(4) ratify the Micmac Settlement Act, which defines the relationship between the State of Maine and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs.

“SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

“For the purposes of this Act:

“(1) The term ‘Band’ means the Aroostook Band of Micmacs, the sole successor to the Micmac Nation as constituted in aboriginal times in what is now the State of Maine, and all its predecessors and successors in interest. The Aroostook Band of Micmacs is represented, as of the date of enactment of this Act [Nov. 26, 1991], as to lands within the United States, by the Aroostook Micmac Council.

“(2) The term ‘Band Tax Fund’ means the fund established under section 4(b) of this Act.

“(3) The term ‘Band Trust Land’ means land or natural resources acquired by the Secretary of the Interior and held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Band.

“(4) The term ‘land or natural resources’ means any real property or natural resources, or any interest in or right involving any real property or natural resources, including (but not limited to) minerals and mineral rights, timber and timber rights, water and water rights, and hunting and fishing rights.

“(5) The term ‘Land Acquisition Fund’ means the fund established under section 4(a) of this Act.

“(6) The term ‘laws of the State’ means the constitution, and all statutes, regulations, and common laws of the State of Maine and its political subdivisions and all subsequent amendments thereto or judicial interpretations thereof.

“(7) The term ‘Maine Implementing Act’ means the Act entitled ‘Act to Implement the Maine Indian Claims Settlement’ that was enacted by the State of Maine in chapter 732 of the Maine Public

Laws of 1979, as amended by chapter 675 of the Maine Public Laws of 1981 and chapter 672 of the Maine Public Laws of 1985, and all subsequent amendments thereto.

“(8) The term ‘Micmac Settlement Act’ means the Act entitled ‘Act to implement the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act’ that was enacted by the State of Maine in chapter 148 of the Maine Public Laws of 1989, and all subsequent amendments thereto.

“(9) The term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of the Interior.

“SEC. 4. AROOSTOOK BAND OF MICMACS LAND ACQUISITION AND PROPERTY TAX

FUNDS.

“(a) Land Acquisition Fund.--There is hereby established in the Treasury of the United States a fund to be known as the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Land Acquisition Fund, into which \$900,000 shall be deposited by the Secretary following the appropriation of sums authorized by section 10.

“(b) Band Tax Fund.--(1) There is hereby established in the Treasury of the United States a fund to be known as the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Tax Fund, into which shall be deposited \$50,000 in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

“(2) Income accrued on the Land Acquisition Fund shall be transferred to the Band Tax Fund until a total of \$50,000 has been transferred to the Band Tax Fund under this paragraph. No transfer shall be made under this subsection if such transfer would diminish the Land Acquisition Fund to a balance of less than \$900,000.

“(3) Whenever funds are transferred to the Band Tax Fund under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall publish notice of such transfer in the Federal Register. Such notice shall specify when the total amount of \$50,000 has been transferred to the Band Tax Fund.

“(4) The Secretary shall manage the Band Tax Fund in accordance with section 1 of the Act of June 24, 1938 (52 Stat. 1037; 25 U.S.C. 162a), and shall utilize the principal and interest of the Band Tax Fund only as provided in paragraph (5) and section 5(d) and for no other purpose.

“(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary shall pay out of the Band Tax Fund, all valid claims for taxes, payments in lieu of property taxes, and fees, together with any interest and penalties thereon--

“(A) for which the Band is determined to be liable;

“(B) which are final and not subject to further administrative or judicial review; and

“(C) which have been certified by the Commissioner of Finance in the State of Maine as valid claims that meet the requirements of this paragraph.

“(c) Source for Certain Payments.--Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if--

“(1) the Band is liable to the State of Maine or any county, district, municipality, city, town, village, plantation, or any other political subdivision thereof for any tax, payment in lieu of property tax, or fees, together with any interest and penalties thereon, and

“(2) there are insufficient funds in the Band Tax Fund to pay such tax, payment, or fee (together with any interest or penalties thereon) in full,

the deficiency shall be paid by the Band only from income-producing property owned by the Band which is not held in trust for the Band by the United States and the Band shall not be required to pay such tax, payment, or fee (or any interest or penalty thereon) from any other source.

“(d) Procedure for Filing and Payment of Claims.--The Secretary shall, after consultation with the Commissioner of Finance of the State of Maine, and the Band, prescribe written procedures governing the filing and payment of claims under this section.

“SEC. 5. AROOSTOOK BAND TRUST LANDS.

“(a) In General.--Subject to the provisions of section 4, the Secretary is authorized and directed to expend, at the request of the Band, the principal of, and income accruing on, the Land Acquisition Fund for the purposes of acquiring land or natural resources for the Band and for no other purposes. Land or natural resources acquired within the State of Maine with funds expended under the authority of this subsection shall be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Band.

“(b) Alienation.--(1) Land or natural resources acquired with funds expended under the authority of subsection (a) and held in trust for the benefit of the Band may be alienated only by--

“(A) takings for public use pursuant to the laws of the State of Maine as provided in subsection (c);

“(B) takings for public use pursuant to the laws of the United States; or

“(C) transfers made pursuant to an Act or joint resolution of Congress.

All other transfers of land or natural resources acquired with funds expended under the authority of subsection (a) and held in trust for the benefit of such Band shall be void ab initio and without any validity in law or equity.

“(2) The provisions of paragraph (1) shall not prohibit or limit transfers of individual use assignments of land or natural resources from one member of the Band to another member of such Band.

“(3) Land or natural resources held in trust for the benefit of the Band may, at the request of the Band, be--

“(A) leased in accordance with the Act of August 9, 1955 (25 U.S.C. 415 et seq.);

“(B) leased in accordance with the Act of May 11, 1938 (25 U.S.C. 396a et seq.);

“(C) sold in accordance with section 7 of the Act of June 25, 1910 (25 U.S.C. 407);

“(D) subjected to rights-of-way in accordance with the Act of February 5, 1948 (25 U.S.C. 323 et seq.);

“(E) exchanged for other land or natural resources of equal value, or if they are not equal, the values shall be equalized by the payment of money to the grantor or to the Secretary for deposit in the land acquisition fund for the benefit of the Band, as the circumstances require, so long as payment does not exceed 25 percent of the total value of the interests in land to be transferred by the Band; and

“(F) sold, only if at the time of sale the Secretary has entered into an option agreement or contract of sale to purchase other lands of approximate equal value.

“(c) Condemnation by State of Maine and Political Subdivisions Thereof.--(1) Land or natural resources acquired with funds expended under the authority of subsection (a) and held in trust for the benefit of the Band may be condemned for public purposes by the State of Maine, or any political subdivision thereof, only upon such terms and conditions as shall be agreed upon in writing between the State and such Band after the date of enactment of this Act [Nov. 26, 1991].

“(2) The consent of the United States is hereby given to the State of Maine to further amend the Micmac Settlement Act for the purpose of embodying the agreement described in paragraph (1).

“(d) Acquisition.--(1) Lands and natural resources may be acquired by the Secretary for the Band only if the Secretary has, at any time prior to such acquisition--

“(A) transmitted a letter to the Secretary of State of the State of Maine stating that the Band Tax Fund contains \$50,000; and

“(B) provided the Secretary of State of the State of Maine with a copy of the procedures for filing and payment of claims prescribed under section 4(d).

“(2)(A) No land or natural resources may be acquired by the Secretary for the Band until the Secretary files with the Secretary of State of the State of Maine a certified copy of the deed, contract, or other conveyance setting forth the location and boundaries of the land or natural resources to be acquired.

“(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), a filing with the Secretary of State of the State of Maine may be made by mail and, if such method of filing is used, shall be considered to be completed on the date on which the document is properly mailed to the Secretary of State of the State of Maine.

“(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of the first section of the Act of August 1, 1888 (40 U.S.C. 257) and the first section of the Act of

February 26, 1931 (40 U.S.C. 258a), the Secretary may acquire land or natural resources under this section from the ostensible owner of the land or natural resources only if the Secretary and the ostensible owner of the land or natural resources have agreed upon the identity of the land or natural resources to be sold and upon the purchase price and other terms of sale. Subject to the agreement required by the preceding sentence, the Secretary may institute condemnation proceedings in order to perfect title, satisfactory to the Attorney General of the United States, in the United States and condemn interests adverse to the ostensible owner.

“(4)(A) When trust or restricted land or natural resources of the Band are condemned pursuant to any law of the United States other than this Act, the proceeds paid in compensation for such condemnation shall be deposited into the Land Acquisition Fund and shall be reinvested in acreage within unorganized or unincorporated areas of the State of Maine. When the proceeds are reinvested in land whose acreage does not exceed that of the land taken, all the land shall be acquired in trust. When the proceeds are invested in land whose acreage exceeds the acreage of the land taken, the Band shall designate, with the approval of the United States, and within 30 days of such reinvestment, that portion of the land acquired by the reinvestment, not to exceed the area taken, which shall be acquired in trust. The land acquired from the proceeds that is not acquired in trust shall be held in fee by the Band. The Secretary shall certify, in writing, to the Secretary of State of the State of Maine the location, boundaries, and status of the land acquired from the proceeds.

“(B) The State of Maine shall have initial jurisdiction over condemnation proceedings brought under this section. The United States shall be a necessary party to any such condemnation proceedings. After exhaustion of all State administrative remedies, the United States is authorized to seek judicial review of all relevant matters involved in such condemnation proceedings in the courts of the United States and shall have an absolute right of removal, at its discretion, over any action commenced in the courts of the State.

“(5) Land or natural resources acquired by the Secretary in trust for the Band shall be managed and administered in accordance with terms established by the Band and agreed to by the Secretary in accordance with section 102 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450f) or other applicable law.

“SEC. 6. LAWS APPLICABLE.

“(a) Federal Recognition.--Federal recognition is hereby extended to the Aroostook Band of Micmacs. The Band shall be eligible to receive all of the financial benefits which the United States provides to Indians and Indian tribes to the same extent, and subject to the same eligibility criteria, generally applicable to other federally recognized Indians and Indian tribes.

“(b) Application of Federal Law.--For the purposes of application of Federal law, the Band and its lands shall have the same status as other tribes and their lands accorded Federal recognition under the terms of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 [25 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.].

“(c) Eligibility for Special Services.--Notwithstanding any other provision of law authorizing the provision of special programs and services by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians, any member of the Band in Aroostook County, Maine, shall be eligible for such services without regard to the existence of a reservation or the residence of members of the Band on or near a reservation.

“(d) Agreements With State Regarding Jurisdiction.--The State of Maine and the Band are authorized to execute agreements regarding the jurisdiction of the State of Maine over lands owned by, or held in trust for the benefit of, the Band or any member of the Band. The consent of the United States is hereby given to the State of Maine to amend the Micmac Settlement Act for this purpose: Provided, That such amendment is made with the agreement of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs.

“SEC. 7. TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.

“(a) In General.--The Band may organize for its common welfare and adopt an appropriate instrument in writing to govern the affairs of the Band when acting in its governmental capacity. Such instrument and any amendments thereto must be consistent with the terms of this Act. The Band shall file with the Secretary a copy of its organic governing document and any amendments thereto.

“(b) Members.--For purposes of benefits provided by reason of this Act, only persons who are citizens of the United States may be considered members of the Band except persons who, as of the date of enactment of this Act [Nov. 26, 1991], are enrolled members on the Band's existing membership roll, and direct lineal descendants of such members. Membership in the Band shall be subject to such further qualifications as may be provided by the Band in its organic governing document, or amendments thereto, subject to approval by the Secretary.

“SEC. 8. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT.

“For the purposes of this section, the Band is an ‘Indian tribe’ within the meaning of section 4(8) of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 1903(8)), except that nothing in this section shall alter or affect the jurisdiction of the State of Maine over child welfare matters as provided by the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 [25 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.].

“SEC. 9. FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS UNAFFECTED BY PAYMENTS UNDER

THIS ACT.

“(a) State of Maine.--No payments to be made for the benefit of the Band pursuant to this Act shall be considered by any agency or

department of the United States in determining or computing the eligibility of the State of Maine for participation in any financial aid program of the United States.

“(b) Band and Members of the Band.--(1) The eligibility for, or receipt of, payments from the State of Maine by the Band or any of its members shall not be considered by any department or agency of the United States in determining the eligibility of, or computing payments to, the Band or any of the members of the Band under any Federal financial aid program.

“(2) To the extent that eligibility for the benefits of any Federal financial aid program is dependent upon a showing of need by the applicant, the administering agency shall not be barred by this subsection from considering the actual financial situation of the applicant.

“SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

“There are authorized to be appropriated \$900,000 for the fiscal year 1992 for transfer to the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Land Acquisition Fund.

“SEC. 11. INTERPRETATION.

“In the event of a conflict of interpretation between the provisions of the Maine Implementing Act, the Micmac Settlement Act, or the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 [25 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.] and this Act, the provisions of this Act shall govern.

“SEC. 12. LIMITATION OF ACTIONS.

“No provision of this Act may be construed to confer jurisdiction to sue, or to grant implied consent to the Band to sue, the United States or any of its officers with respect to the claims extinguished by the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 [25 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.].”