

CORPORATE CHARTER
OF THE
FORT BELKNAP INDIAN COMMUNITY
A FEDERAL CORPORATION CHARTERED UNDER THE
ACT OF JUNE 18, 1934

Whereas, the Fort Belknap Indian Community of the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana constitutes a recognized Indian Community organized under a constitution and by-laws ratified by the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine tribes of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation on October 19, 1935, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on December 13, 1935, pursuant to section 16 of the Act of June 18, 1934, (48 Stat. 984), as amended by the Act of June 15, 1935, (49 Stat. 378); and

Whereas, more than one-third of the Indians on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation who are members of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine tribes have petitioned that a charter of incorporation be granted to such community, subject to ratification by vote of said Indians living on said reservation;

Now, therefore, I, Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, by virtue of the authority conferred upon me by the said Act of June 18, 1934, (48 Stat. 984), do hereby issue and submit this charter of incorporation to the Fort Belknap Indian Community of the Fort Belknap reservation to be effective from and after such time as it may be ratified by a majority vote of the adult Indians, members of the said two tribes, living on the reservation.

Corporate
existence

1. In order to further the economic development of the Fort Belknap Indian Community of the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana by conferring upon the said Community certain corporate rights, powers, privileges and immunities; to secure for the members of the Community an assured economic independence; and to provide for the proper exercise by the Community of various functions heretofore performed by the Department of the Interior, the aforesaid Community is hereby chartered as a body politic and corporate of the United States of America, under the corporate name of "The Fort Belknap Indian Community."

Perpetual
Succession

2. The Fort Belknap Indian Community shall, as a Federal corporation, have perpetual succession.

Membership

3. The Fort Belknap Indian Community shall be a membership

"EXHIBIT A."

The Act of Congress of April 15, 1874, established and set apart for the use and occupation of the Gros Ventre, Piegan, Blood, Blackfeet, and River Crow and such other Indians as the President might from time to time see fit to locate thereon the following described territory.

Commencing at the northwest corner of the Territory of Dakota, being the intersection of the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude and the one hundred and fourth meridian of west longitude; thence south to the south bank of the Missouri River; thence up and along the south bank of said river, to a point opposite the mouth of the Marias River; thence along the main channel of the Marias River to Birch Creek; thence up the main channel of Birch Creek to its source; thence west to the summit of the main chain of the Rocky Mountains; thence along the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the northern boundary of Montana; thence along said northern boundary to the place of beginning.

It is claimed by the Indians that the unratified treaty of 1868 created no obligation upon upon the Indians and that the United States unjustly deprived them of their lands by said treaty and the Executive Order of 1873, *supra*, and the Act of Congress of 1874 referred to. In this connection reference is made to the decision of the Court of Claims in Moore's Case (32 Ct. Cl. 593), which holds that where a treaty not formally ratified is acted upon by Congress and its benefits accepted by the Indians it is considered a binding treaty.

In view of the foregoing and this decision of the Court I am unable to recommend S. 249 for favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signed) E.C. Finney

Acting Secretary.

The same letter was sent to the Honorable Homer P. Snyder, Chairman of the House Committee on Indian Affairs, in regard to H.R. 2432.

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corporation. Its members shall consist of all persons now or hereafter members of the Community, as provided by its duly ratified and approved Constitution and by-laws.

Management

4. The Fort Belknap Community Council, consisting of six members elected by the Gros ventre tribe of Indians of the Fort Belknap Reservation, and six members elected by the Assiniboine tribe of Indians of the Fort Belknap Indian reservation, shall exercise all of the corporate powers hereinafter enumerated.

Corporate Powers

5. The Community, subject to any restrictions contained in the Constitution and laws of the United States, the Constitution and laws of the State of Montana, the Constitution and By-laws of the said Community, and of this Charter shall have the following corporate powers; ~~in~~