

Committee Approves Tlingit-Haida Bill

The House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee last week approved the Senate-passed Gruening-Bartlett bill relating to Tlingit-Haida judgments.

In 1935 Congress enacted legislation permitting property suits to be brought in the Court of Claims. In 1959 a favorable judgment was handed down by the Court of Claims involving some 18 million acres of land in Southeastern Alaska.

The amount of the judgment is still to be determined. The original law did not permit per capita payments, a prohibition which is eliminated by the Gruening-Bartlett bill.

The measure provides that judgment funds will not be available for advances, with the exception of certain attorney and litigation fees, until further legislation is passed setting forth the purposes for which the funds are to be used, including per capita payments and/or community development.

In the meantime the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indians is to prepare plans for the use of the money.

The only part to be played by the Interior Secretary is to prepare a roll of citizens of Tlingit and Haida blood residing in the United States.