

Indians sue in Massachusetts

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Six Indian groups filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court on Friday seeking to regain \$1 billion worth of land on Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard.

The suit involves about 24,000 acres of land in Gay Head, West Tisbury and Chappaquiddick — all on the island of Martha's Vineyard — and Plymouth Bourne, Mashpee and Fall River in the southeastern part of the state.

Six Wampanoag Indian tribes were listed as plaintiffs — the Chappaquiddicks, Christianowners, Herring Ponders, Mashpees, Troys and Gay Headers.

The coalition, represented by attorney Robert Hahn, also asked President Reagan to establish a special commission to

look into the entire Indian land situation in Massachusetts. Letters also were sent to the state Congressional delegation and the state Legislature.

Hahn said the suit maintains that after 1789 the sovereignty over Indian land was passed from the state to the U.S. government, meaning that tribal property could not be surrendered or taken without federal consent.

"Those land areas have been federally protected since that time for the respective tribes," he said by telephone Friday night. "All acts of the commonwealth during the later 1800s were acts of the state that had no federal authority."

Hahn said the land was "easily" worth at least \$1 billion.