

[H.R. 387, Economic Development Through Tribal Land Exchange Act](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Monday, July 13, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 387](#), *the Economic Development Through Tribal Land Exchange Act*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 387 was introduced on January 14, 2015, by Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA) and was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, which ordered the bill reported by unanimous consent on June 11, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 387 authorizes a land exchange in California to benefit the Morongo Band of Mission Indians. The exchange involves the Morongo Tribe, the City of Banning, California, and a private landowner, Lloyd Fields. The purpose of the exchange is to consolidate in tribal ownership a partially checker-boarded area within the Morongo Reservation containing land currently owned by Mr. Fields. In exchange, the tribe shall convey to Fields a parcel of land on the edge of the reservation affording him suitable accessibility for economic and other uses. The bill provides for several public easements to be provided to the City of Banning for various public purposes.

BACKGROUND

The Morongo Reservation, which is located eighty miles east of Los Angeles, was established by executive order in the late 1800s. The Reservation comprises more than 30,000 acres and certain portions near the city of Banning are “checker-boarded,” in that they are alternating parcels owned by the Tribe and different persons or entities. In 1995, a private landowner, Lloyd Fields acquired forty-one acres of land, which was eventually surrounded by land acquired by the tribe. A dispute subsequently emerged among the Tribe, the city of Banning, and Fields when he sought to develop the property. The tribe limited Mr. Fields’ access by constructing a guard post on the only road that accessed the property, which Mr. Fields asserted was illegal. The City was uncertain about its authority to remove the post. The parties settled the dispute by agreeing to a land exchange. H.R. 387 authorizes and implements the exchange.¹

¹ [House Report 114-173](#) at 1 and 2.

The House passed an identical bill ([H.R. 4867](#)) by voice vote on November 13, 2014. The Senate did not act on that measure before the 113th Congress adjourned.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that implementing H.R. 387 would have no significant effect on the federal budget. Enacting H.R. 387 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [Jerry White](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 5-0190.