

President Obama Signs HEARTH Act



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On July 30, 2012, President Barack Obama signed into law the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (HEARTH) Act, less than two weeks after the U.S. Senate passed the Act by unanimous consent. The HEARTH Act will allow Native American tribes to lease land without first obtaining approval from the Secretary of the Interior. While the HEARTH Act does not apply to leases for the exploration, development, or extraction of mineral resources, or to leases of allotted land, it does give tribes the authority to approve any surface lease for business, agricultural, public, religious, education, recreational or residential purposes.

According to a statement by the White House,

"The HEARTH Act promotes greater tribal self-determination and will help create jobs in Indian Country. Under the Act, federally recognized tribes can develop and implement their own regulations governing certain leasing on Indian lands. Upon Secretarial approval of these tribal regulations, tribes would have the authority to process land leases without Bureau of Indian Affairs approval. This new authority has the potential to significantly reduce the time it takes to approve leases for homes and small businesses in Indian Country."

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