

For Immediate Release

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Historic *Cobell* Settlement Passes U.S. House of Representatives

Tribal Water Rights Settlements also Headed to President for Signature into Federal Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. - November 30, 2010 – In a historic vote today, the United States House of Representatives passed the \$3.4 billion *Cobell* Settlement as part of H.R. 4387, the Claims Resolution Act of 2010. The Claims Resolution Act of 2010 now moves to President Obama's desk for signature.

"The passage of the *Cobell* Settlement is a significant milestone in the history of American Indian relations with United States government," said Jefferson Keel, President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country. "Not only does *Cobell* settle historic injustices through legal means, it starts the U.S. government on a course for meeting its obligations and making reservation lands more productive for future generations. We commend the bipartisan effort from members of the House and Senate who worked tirelessly to pass this legislation."

The *Cobell* settlement resolves the long running class action litigation over mismanagement of Indian trust funds. It also includes payment for resource mismanagement and funds for consolidation of fractionated lands. The case has been pending since 1996.

In press releases, following statements on the House floor, both Representative Tom Cole (R-OK) and House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), outlined the importance of passing the *Cobell* Settlement as part of the Claims Resolutions Act of 2010.

"This legislation brings a fair and responsible resolution to the Cobell case and is a great bargain for American taxpayers," said Representative Tom Cole (R-OK), Co-Chairman of the Native American Caucus. "The Cobell settlement helps correct a historic wrong and ensures that Native Americans enjoy the full benefit of tribal lands and resources. The bill is fully paid for and will save taxpayers millions in additional costly litigation."

"These settlements have been reached in court, and now it is our job to ensure that the federal government lives up to its end of the bargain," said House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD). "I'm glad that this bill funds the Pigford and Cobell settlements without adding to the deficit; and I'm also glad that this bill can bring to a close an unfortunate chapter in our history."

In recent weeks, the Cobell Settlement moved forward rapidly in the Senate as budget neutral legislation, after lingering for the last year in both houses. Unresolved for fourteen years, the settlement was part of a number of historic measures included in the Claims Resolution Act of 2010. In addition to the *Cobell* Settlement, historic water settlements vital to Indian Country, totaling over \$1 billion, were passed as part H.R. 4387. The water settlements involved the Crow Tribe, Taos Pueblo, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, and the Aamodt Settlement including the Pueblos of Nambe, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso and Tesuque.

About The National Congress of American Indians:

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians is the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country. NCAI advocates on behalf of tribal governments and communities, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people and rights. For more information visit www.ncai.org

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