

SENATE BILL NO. 265

INTRODUCED BY V. JACKSON

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT EXTENDING THE SUSPENSION OF WATER RIGHT ADJUDICATION DURING NEGOTIATIONS OF INDIAN AND FEDERAL RESERVED WATER RIGHTS; AMENDING SECTIONS 85-2-217 AND 85-2-702, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 85-2-217, MCA, is amended to read:

"85-2-217. Suspension of adjudication. While negotiations for the conclusion of a compact under part 7 are being pursued, all proceedings to generally adjudicate reserved Indian water rights and federal reserved water rights of those tribes and federal agencies that are negotiating are suspended. The obligation to file water rights claims for those federal non-Indian and Indian reserved rights is also suspended. This suspension is effective until July 1, ~~2013~~ 2015, as long as negotiations are continuing or ratification of a completed compact is being sought. If approval by the state legislature and tribes or federal agencies has not been accomplished by July 1, ~~2013~~ 2015, the suspension must terminate on that date. Upon termination of the suspension of this part, the tribes and the federal agencies are subject to the special filing requirements of 85-2-702(3) and all other requirements of the state water adjudication system provided for in Title 85, chapter 2. Those tribes and federal agencies that choose not to negotiate their federal non-Indian and Indian reserved water rights are subject to the full operation of the state adjudication system and may not benefit from the suspension provisions of this section."

Section 2. Section 85-2-702, MCA, is amended to read:

"85-2-702. Negotiation with Indian tribes. (1) The reserved water rights compact commission, created by 2-15-212, may negotiate with the Indian tribes or their authorized representatives jointly or severally to conclude compacts authorized under 85-2-701. Compact proceedings must be commenced by the commission. The commission shall serve by certified mail directed to the governing body of each tribe a written request for the initiation of negotiations under this part and a request for the designation of an authorized representative of the tribe to conduct compact negotiations. Compact negotiations commence upon receipt of the written designation from the governing body of a tribe.

(2) When the compact commission and the Indian tribes or their authorized representatives have agreed to a compact, they shall sign a copy and file an original copy with the department of state of the United States of America and copies with the secretary of state of Montana and with the governing body for the tribe involved. The compact is effective and binding upon all parties upon ratification by the legislature of Montana and any affected tribal governing body, and approval by the appropriate federal authority.

(3) Upon its ratification by the Montana legislature and the tribe, the terms of a compact must be included in the preliminary decree as provided by 85-2-231, and unless an objection to the compact is sustained under 85-2-233, the terms of the compact must be included in the final decree without alteration. However, if approval of the state legislature and the tribe has not been accomplished by July 1, ~~2013~~ 2015, all Indian claims for reserved water rights that have not been resolved by a compact must be filed with the department within 24 months. These new filings must be used in the formulation of the preliminary decree and must be given treatment similar to that given to all other filings."

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Notification to tribal governments. The secretary of state shall send a copy of [this act] to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little Shell Chippewa tribe.

NEW SECTION. Section 4. Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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