

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 9536

To extend Federal recognition to the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe of North Carolina, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 14, 2022

Mr. BUTTERFIELD introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To extend Federal recognition to the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe of North Carolina, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Haliwa-Saponi Indian
5 Tribe of North Carolina Recognition Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe of North
9 Carolina is a confederated Tribe that is a political
10 successor to the historical Saponi Nation and to the

1 Nansemond and affiliated Tribes that inhabited the
2 Piedmont and coastal regions of what are now Vir-
3 ginia and North Carolina.

4 (2) “Haliwa” is a geographical designation that
5 is derived from the physical location of the Tribe,
6 which is primarily in Halifax and Warren Counties,
7 North Carolina.

8 (3) In North Carolina, in 1733, the Saponi Na-
9 tion made peace with the Tuscarora and moved to
10 a portion of the Tuscarora reservation in modern
11 Bertie County, North Carolina, occupying a village
12 known as Sapona Town.

13 (4) In 1754, Captain William Hurst observed
14 the residence of Saponi warriors and many women
15 and children on Colonel William Eaton’s lands in the
16 Granville District (modern Granville, Warren, and
17 Vance Counties, North Carolina).

18 (5) In 1761, the Saponi Indians were living on
19 10,000 acres of land in the Granville District on and
20 near the Roanoke River (modern-day Warren Coun-
21 ty, North Carolina), along with the Meherrin and
22 Tuscarora.

23 (6) In Virginia, as acknowledged by Congress in
24 the Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia
25 Federal Recognition Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–

1 121; 132 Stat. 59 et seq.), there were two sections
2 of the Nansemond Tribe, one of which remained in
3 Virginia and was accorded Federal recognition in
4 2018 concurrently with five other Tribes still resi-
5 dent in Virginia by that same statute.

6 (7) Another section of the Nansemond Tribe
7 had migrated to North Carolina due to hostilities in
8 Virginia, and today enrolled citizens of the Haliwa-
9 Saponi Indian Tribe include lineal descendants of
10 those Nansemond.

11 (8) After the American Revolution (1775–
12 1783), the Nansemond and Saponi merged together
13 for mutual protection and survival in Halifax, War-
14 ren, Nash, and Franklin Counties, in an area known
15 as “The Meadows”.

16 (9) Among the surrounding communities, the
17 Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe has often been referred
18 to as the “Meadows Indians”.

19 (10) In 1889, Warren County, North Carolina
20 resident G.B. Alston wrote to the Smithsonian Insti-
21 tution anthropologist James Mooney and confirmed
22 the residence of a Tribe of 300–600 Indians in the
23 Meadows in Halifax and Warren Counties.

1 (11) The Tribe has continually existed as a sep-
2 arate community, with leaders exhibiting clear polit-
3 ical authority.

4 (12) While local non-Indians recognized the In-
5 dian and Tribal identity of the Haliwa-Saponi, oth-
6 ers insisted on classifying Tribal citizens as “col-
7 ored” rather than Indian, due to segregation.

8 (13) During the era of school segregation, the
9 Tribe opened its own school, the Haliwa Indian
10 School, operated with the Tribe’s own funds.

11 (14) Since 1957 the State of North Carolina
12 has had continuous dealings with the recognized po-
13 litical leaders of the Haliwa-Saponi.

14 (15) In 1957, the Tribe opened the Haliwa In-
15 dian School.

16 (16) Between 1960 and 1963, students from
17 the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe attended Bacone
18 College for Indians in Muscogee, Oklahoma.

19 (17) In 1965, the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe
20 won a lawsuit against the North Carolina Division
21 of Vital Statistics to correct the race of Haliwa-
22 Saponi citizens on official records to read “Indian”.

23 (18) In 1965 the State of North Carolina took
24 formal legislative action recognizing the Haliwa-
25 Saponi Indian Tribe.

1 (19) In the early 1970s, local public school dis-
2 tricts started receiving Federal funds from the De-
3 partment of Education, Office of Indian Education,
4 for Haliwa-Saponi Indian students.

5 (20) In 1998, the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe
6 began receiving a formula allocation from the De-
7 partment of Housing and Urban Development, Na-
8 tive American Housing Assistance and Self Deter-
9 mination Act.

10 (21) In 2000, the Tribe opened the Haliwa-
11 Saponi Tribal School, a charter school under the
12 State of North Carolina, at the location of the origi-
13 nal Haliwa Indian School, and the school currently
14 receives Federal funds from the Department of Edu-
15 cation, Office of Indian Education for Haliwa-
16 Saponi Indian students.

17 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

18 In this Act:

19 (1) MEMBER.—The term “Member” means a
20 member of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe of North
21 Carolina.

22 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
23 the Secretary of the Interior.

24 (3) TRIBE.—The term “Tribe” means the
25 Haliwa-Saponi Tribe of North Carolina.

1 **SEC. 4. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Federal recognition is extended to
3 the Tribe.

4 (b) APPLICABILITY OF LAWS.—All laws (including
5 regulations) of the United States of general applicability
6 to Indians or nations, Indian Tribes, or bands of Indians
7 (including the Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 5101 et
8 seq.)) that are not inconsistent with this Act shall be ap-
9 plicable to the Tribe and Tribal members.

10 **SEC. 5. FEDERAL SERVICES AND BENEFIT.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Tribe and its members shall
12 be eligible for all services and benefits provided by the
13 Federal Government to federally recognized Indian Tribes
14 without regard to the existence of a reservation for the
15 Tribe, including services and benefits under the Act of
16 June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.).

17 (b) SERVICE AREA.—For the purpose of the delivery
18 of Federal services and benefits to members, the service
19 area of the Tribe shall include Halifax, Warren, Nash,
20 Franklin, Vance, and Granville counties in the State of
21 North Carolina.

22 (c) SERVICE POPULATION.—For purpose of the deliv-
23 ery of Federal services and benefits described in sub-
24 section (a), the Tribal roll in effect on the date of enact-
25 ment of this Act shall, subject to verification by the Sec-
26 retary, define the service population of the Tribe.

1 (d) ROLL; GOVERNING DOCUMENTS.—The member-
2 ship roll and government documents of the Tribe shall be
3 the most recent membership roll and governing docu-
4 ments, respectively, submitted by the Tribe to the Sec-
5 retary before the date of enactment of this Act.

6 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION TO TAKE LAND INTO TRUST.**

7 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Sec-
8 retary is authorized to take land into trust for the benefit
9 of the Tribe and proclaim a reservation for the Tribe pur-
10 suant to the authorities granted to the Secretary in the
11 Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.).

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