

OLD PASCUA COMMUNITY LAND ACQUISITION ACT

October 2021

On July 30, 2021, Chair Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) introduced the Old Pascua Community Land Acquisition Act. This bill would place land into a trust on behalf of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OLD PASCUA COMMUNITY?

The Old Pascua community was excluded from the creation of the Pascua Yaqui reservation boundaries in 1978. Old Pascua is home to churches, sacred sites, and ceremonial grounds that are culturally significant to the Pascua Yaqui people.

HISTORY OF OLD PASCUA COMMUNITY

1920

Forty acres of land near Tucson, Arizona, were donated by A.M. Franklin to establish the Yaqui Nation. A portion of this land is now known as "Old Pascua." This area has been used as a sacred ceremonial site since 1921 and is home to the oldest formally established Yaqui community in Tucson.

1959

The Yaqui Nation lands, including Old Pascua, were annexed into the City of Tucson. The annexation led to the City's encroachment on the Yaqui community, which caused challenges related to regulations, taxation, ownership of their sacred, cultural, traditional, and religious grounds, and access to important sites.

1960s

Legislation introduced by Rep. Mo Udall (D-Ariz.) established the Pascua Yaqui Association and allocated 202 acres of land. However, that land did not include Old Pascua.

1978

The Pascua Yaqui Tribe was granted federal recognition and a reservation land base that did not include Old Pascua.

2016

The Pascua Yaqui Tribe enters into negotiations with the State of Arizona to amend and restate their gaming compact.

2021

After five years, the State of Arizona and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe finalized negotiations, later approved by the Secretary of Interior in May 2021.

HOW WOULD THE OLD PASCUA COMMUNITY LAND ACQUISITION ACT FIX THIS PROBLEM?

This legislation would place Old Pascua community lands into trust status for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Doing so will enable the Tribe to conduct gaming activities as approved by the State of Arizona, expand economic development opportunities, and engage in cultural practices on the land. This would be an important step in improving the Tribe's governmental operations, access to cultural and religious activities, job opportunities, housing, social and community services, health care, and educational facilities.