

I voted Yes on H.R. 2362, the Indian Tribal Trade and Investment Demonstration Project Act.

This bill would allow up to six Indian tribes to enter into a demonstration project providing for leases of tribal lands without approval by the Interior Department. The leases would have to be made with a private entity from a World Trade Organization nation. Permissible activities allowed for under the leases could include economic development, education, residential projects, grazing and farming.

Currently, in order for a tribe to lease land to outside parties for projects, it must seek Interior Department approval on a case-by-case basis, and this burdensome process that can take several years. This legislation is intended to speed up the economic development of underdeveloped tribal lands which face extremely high poverty rates by attracting foreign investment.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the bill would have no significant impact on the federal budget.

The bill was not approved by a vote of 222 – 160, because it failed to receive a two-thirds majority under suspension of the rules.