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CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA ANNOUNCE FILING OF CLAIMS WITH DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Unresolved Claims Effect Land/Water Rights in Colorado

The policy of the United States is “To make clear that all acts of terrorism are illegitimate so that terrorism will be viewed in the same light as slavery, piracy, or genocide: behavior respectable governments cannot condone or support and that all must oppose.”

Statement of President George W. Bush, “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” White House Policy Paper (April 2003) (emphasis added).

CONCHO, OK (April 14, 2004) – Today, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma (the “Nations”), held a press conference to announce, as the next step in the Homecoming Project, the formal filing of Claims and a Petition to Settle with the United States Department of the Interior. The Claims cover 27 million acres of ancestral land in Colorado. If left unresolved the Claims are expected to increasingly cloud title to land and water rights in the state for years.

Members of the Nations, their business committee and tribal leaders met to announce the first step in their return to an economic and cultural presence in Colorado. Speaking to reporters Vice Chairman Bill Blind, “It is time to remember our legacy with more than street and county names and memorial plaques.”

The Claims outline a sad and brutal history. They demonstrate that the Nations entrusted themselves to the United States during a time of unlawful settlement on their land. While in their

guardianship, the Government began a documented, forced and systematic removal of the Nations from Colorado following the discovery of gold. Undisputed facts show a deliberate plan of genocide that sought to destroy the Nations as functioning sovereign entities through their removal and through the massacre of women, children and many tribal leaders. Once the Nations were deliberately disabled with respect to the United States, the Government used invalid treaty processes to remove the Nations out of the state. As a result, the Nations still enjoy title and possess valid claims to 27 million acres of land and water rights in eastern Colorado.

The Claims are further supported by dynamic, new developments in the areas of international law, the law governing the United States' role as fiduciary and guardian, significant Colorado Supreme Court rulings validating similar land claims, and recent admissions by the United States of facts constituting the continuing disability of the Nations.

The Petition also includes a proposed settlement, the hallmark of which is the principle that the Nations do not seek one acre or one penny from public or private interests. Instead, they seek only reservation status on not more than 500 acres of land which they will pay for. Vice-Chairman Bill Blind said, "Colorado voters statewide were surveyed and three out of four favored this concept for a fair settlement. As far as we're concerned, in a fair and balanced settlement process, everything is on the table."

While the Claims cite many historical events as episodes in the process of genocide and removal, the Claims do not seek reparations for the events at Sand Creek and do not affect the claims of any individuals relating to that tragedy.

Further information including a copy of the Claims and the Petition, synopsis of the Claims, references

and other information is available at www.homecomingproject.org

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