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# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ALASKA STATE OFFICE  
222 W. 7th Avenue, #13  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99513-7599

1120(912)

Feb. 20, 1990

Honorable Arliss Sturgulewski  
Alaska State Senate  
Rm. 427, Capitol  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Sen. Sturgulewski

We have reviewed the resolution in support of additional funding for the Bureau of Land Management which you introduced on January 31, 1990.

Our most serious budget shortfall is in the land conveyance area. We are seeing a steady decline in output of state and Native patents as well as Native Allotment certificates. This program has been in place for 30 years and will continue for at least another 30 if we don't get more money for conveyance and survey to offset the effects of inflation. This delays the final conveyance of entitlement and continues the unsettled ownership pattern which results in a lot of missed opportunities for all parties.

We are at serious risk of additional litigation if we are unable to meet our responsibilities in the minerals area. Miners on Federal claims in 4 areas experienced a yearlong shutdown while we prepared court ordered Environmental Impact Statements. We are still under close scrutiny. No one wants to go through that again.

Many of our Wildlife and Fisheries goals complement state initiatives and we are missing many opportunities for cost share programs. The Norton Sound Fisheries Enhancement Plan is an excellent example of a joint state-BLM plan to benefit subsistence and commercial fisheries. Unfortunately, it is underfunded on both the state and Federal side.

Sen. Arliss Sturgulewski  
Feb. 20, 1990, p.2

There are many opportunities for state-BLM cooperation in Alaska's recreation and tourism initiative. Every BLM dollar spent in the development of recreation facilities; interpretation and preservation of the history, geology, development and culture of Alaska; and the support of the commercial recreation industry is a state dollar that is not needed. We cannot afford to be competitive with each other. Many of the resources on BLM land should have national attention and receive national funding.

The President's budget for Fiscal Year 1991 contains some exciting new concepts for BLM which should benefit Alaska in the future. We are optimistic about this administration and Cy Jamison, the new Director. We see some positive changes ahead for our programs.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Les Rosenkrance  
State Director



**BLM** Who we are,  
What we do.

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Bureau of Land Management  
Alaska State Office  
Public Affairs

## **The Public Lands**

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The public lands are lands obtained by the U.S. government through treaty or purchase. As our nation developed, more than one billion acres were transferred to private ownership. Other federal lands were designated as parks, wildlife refuges, forests or military reservations. The remaining areas, once described as "the lands nobody wanted," are now recognized as a valuable national asset known as the Public Lands. These lands offer a wealth of minerals, fossil fuels, wildlife habitat, wilderness, timber and forage. They also offer opportunities for recreation and watershed protection. All Americans share in the benefits of the wise management of the Public Lands.

# The Bureau of Land Management

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The Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, is an agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior, was created in 1946 when the U.S. Grazing Service was merged with the General Land Office. In Alaska, BLM now has responsibilities once undertaken by the Reindeer Service and Alaska Fire Control Service. Today, the BLM provides multiple-use management for more than 270 million acres of Public Lands, most of which are in 11 western states. Approximately 80 million of these acres are in Alaska.

The Bureau of Land Management is a multiple-use agency. District managers and their teams of resource specialists and support personnel play a key role in determining what activities occur on the Public Lands. In Alaska, there are five district offices located in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Glennallen. Three field stations serve as public contact points in Tok, Kotzebue and Nome. The BLM state office in Anchorage serves as a contact point for the BLM Washington Office and other government agencies. Support centers in Fairbanks and Anchorage assist the five districts.

The Arctic District administers about 34 million acres of Public Lands on Alaska's North Slope, including the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska and a segment of the transportation corridor that contains the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline. Major resources in this district include oil and gas, internationally important wildlife nesting habitat and various archeological and cultural sites.

The 17-million-acre Kobuk District includes most of the Public Lands in west-central Alaska. These lands provide numerous opportunities for wilderness backpacking, trapping, fishing, camping and river floating. A substantial portion of the district is the winter range for the western arctic caribou herd. The Seward Peninsula provides forage for a growing reindeer industry for Alaska Natives.

The Steese/White Mountains District is responsible for 7.5 million acres of Public Lands, including the Steese National Conservation Area, the White Mountains National Recreation Area, Ft. Egbert National Historic Site at Eagle and three components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Major resource use includes recreation, mining, hunting, fishing, and subsistence activities.

The Glennallen District manages approximately 5.5 million acres of Public Lands in east-central Alaska, the majority of which are along the scenic Denali Highway. Major resource programs include timber sales, recreation, fish habitat studies, mining and rights-of-way management.

The Anchorage District manages 16 million acres in southwest, southcentral and southeast Alaska. Large concentrations of Public Lands are found along the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. Portions of the Iditarod National Historic Trail pass through the district. Major resource programs include mining, Native allotment surveys and management of subsurface rights. The Campbell Tract in Anchorage serves as a valuable outdoor education laboratory for thousands of school children.

## It's all about land

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Alaska's 378 million acres were purchased by the federal government from Russia in 1867 for about two cents an acre. Most of this land was at one time administered by the BLM or predecessor agencies. Land — who owns it, who gets it and who can use it. These are the issues that the BLM must deal with every day.

Legislation such as the Alaska Statehood Act (1958), the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (1971), and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (1981), radically changed the land ownership pattern of Alaska by allocating more than 104 million acres of BLM-administered Public Lands to the state of Alaska and 44 million acres to Native corporations, and by establishing more than 100 million acres of national parks, monuments, preserves and wildlife refuges. After all conveyances are completed, the remaining Public Lands will still be administered by BLM under the principles of multiple use management.

BLM survey crews carefully locate and establish survey monuments, often called "brass caps," to physically mark the points on the earth's surface and tie the land to its legal description.

Boundary lines of all lands to be transferred, plus those of any inholdings, must be surveyed by the BLM before the new owners can receive patent. Each summer BLM survey crews are sent to remote base camps in all parts of the state to get the job done. A large survey camp of 14 to 16 people will typically need more than 200 items weighing up to 65,000 lbs. and will use more than 60,000 gallons of fuel during the summer. BLM's warehouse crews and air logistics operations keep these camps operating. Almost one million pounds of equipment and supplies are transported annually.

In general, Congress has directed that most Public Lands be retained in federal ownership. However, Public Lands can be transferred to private ownership in a variety of ways.

Individual Native allotments up to 160 acres in size are being surveyed by BLM as part of the federal government's responsibilities under the 1906 Native Allotment Act. Miners receive patent to lands with mineral deposits after performing assessment work on valid claims and meeting other requirements. If the BLM's land use planning process determines that disposal of a given parcel of land is in the public interest, the parcel can be sold for a fair market value or exchanged for another parcel of equal value.

The BLM is the custodian of the nation's real estate records. Master Title Plats not only show land ownership but also any leases, rights-of-way acts, withdrawals and public land actions in effect.

Any citizen can determine the legal history of a parcel of land while it was under federal ownership by visiting a public land record information center at a BLM office.

Public lands are frequently used by others even though ownership is retained by the federal government. The BLM administers rights-of-way for hundreds of miles of roads, electrical transmission lines, pipelines and other uses. BLM also grants temporary use permits for landfills, parks, airstrips, temporary storage facilities and other uses.

All laws relating to homesteading on Public Lands in Alaska expired in 1986. The Public Lands are no longer available for cabins, trade and manufacturing sites, recreation sites or homes.

## It's all about resources

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Alaska's Public Lands possess natural resources of enormous value. Traditional resources such as coal, timber and fish are traded worldwide to make life more comfortable for people everywhere. Today, new opportunities in the realm of historic, cultural, scientific and recreational resources are emerging to assume new importance in the development of the Alaska of the future.

BLM manages the habitat for the plants and animals that live on our public lands. Special emphasis is placed on threatened or endangered species such as the arctic peregrine falcon. BLM cooperates with other agencies to monitor population levels so that scientists can predict how environmental changes will affect the species. Current research projects in Alaska are aimed at understanding the needs of caribou, marten, moose, and peregrine falcons.

Alaska's mineral wealth has been recognized for more than a hundred years. Millions of ounces of gold have been removed from such places as Nome, the Fortymile country and Fairbanks.

BLM surface protection specialists and geologists work with miners who have claims located on public lands to help them meet legal requirements necessary to receive patent and to advise them in techniques that will avoid unnecessary surface disturbances.

BLM has surface management responsibilities for on-shore oil and gas production in producing fields such as those on the Kenai Peninsula and has oversight responsibilities for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. BLM also administers the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska on the North Slope.

People come to Alaska from all over the world for the adventure of a lifetime or a week of solitude amid scenic grandeur. The Public Lands in Alaska offer

outstanding opportunities for sightseeing, hiking, photography, wildlife observation, fishing, hunting and other recreational pursuits.

The BLM administers six Alaska components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. These include portions of the Delta, Fortymile, Unalakleet and Gulkana rivers and Beaver and Birch creeks where recreationists can experience anything from a quiet float trip to whitewater rapids.

Portions of the Iditarod National Historic Trail from Seward to Nome cross BLM-administered Public Lands. Today, the world famous Iditarod sled dog race is run along portions of this route each March.

Fort Egbert, on the banks of the Yukon River, dates back to 1899. Its long and colorful history has not been forgotten as it has been partially restored. Guided tours conducted by the BLM and the local historical society are available in the summer.

Recent studies indicate that some forest fires can benefit other resources. For example, the rapid increase of lush vegetation following a clean burn provides new wildlife habitat for a variety of birds and mammals. Public Lands are valuable outdoor laboratories for research studies about our natural world.

Under predetermined and carefully monitored circumstances, some natural wildfires are allowed to burn, saving money and manpower to protect more critical areas.

## It's all about technology

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Units of Public Land in Alaska vary in size from parcels of only a few acres to blocks the size of states. Gathering information about these lands and their resources can be expensive and time consuming if done by traditional methods. Today BLM-Alaska makes use of state-of-the-art equipment and space-age technology to get the job done quickly and efficiently.

The technology of the 21st century has arrived early to help manage your Public Lands in Alaska.

Air photos are invaluable yet inexpensive tools for many BLM resource specialists to observe and manage the Public Lands. Environmental changes in remote areas can be easily monitored. For example, wildlife biologists use photos to evaluate wildlife habitat conditions. Surface protection specialists monitor rehabilitation success in areas where mining has occurred. Lakes and shorelines can be easily mapped. This information is used to determine how much federal land has yet to be transferred to the state of Alaska and Native corporations.

A Landsat satellite, orbiting 575 miles above the earth, scanned the vegetation of a six-million-acre area in southwest Alaska. BLM resource specialists then combined this information with computerized elevation data derived from topographic maps to produce this composite image.

Skilled resource professionals can obtain an amazing amount of information from this image. For example, if a new road is needed to move equipment to a drilling site, potential gravel deposits needed for construction can be identified. Then, travel routes that avoid steep or wet, boggy terrain can be planned, lowering construction costs. Wildlife habitat can be identified and avoided during road construction.

Survey field work has tripled in volume with the help of modern technology. The multi-million dollar Auto-Surveyor system is the key element in

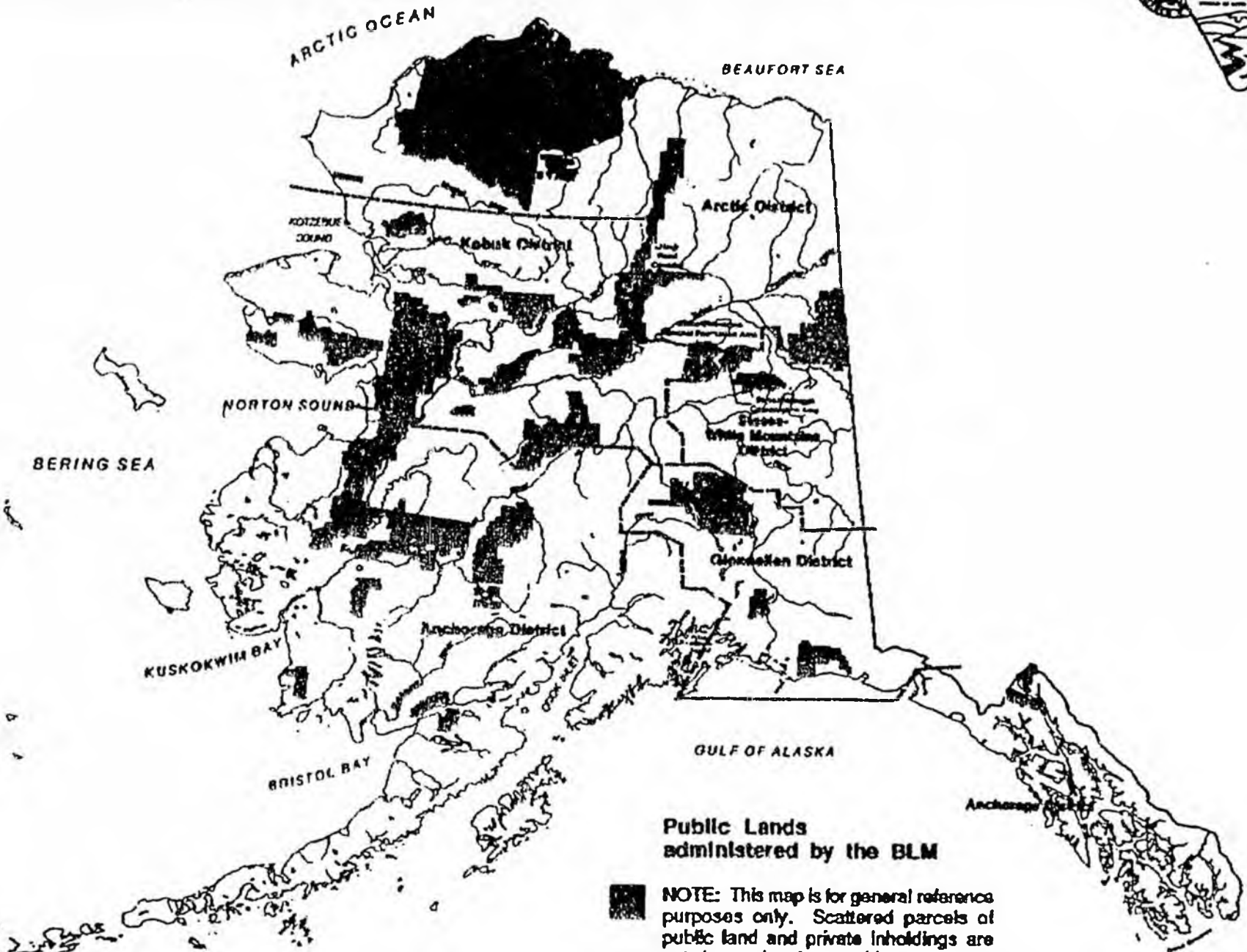
the BLM tool kit. The Auto-Surveyor is mounted in a helicopter and uses satellite orientation procedures to determine its starting position. The exact location of rivers and shorelines can be recorded in seconds as the pilot flies over them. It would take months of work to obtain the same data by using traditional survey methods.

There are more than 200,000 land record casefiles maintained by the BLM in Alaska. Tracking the location of each file is now easily accomplished by the use of magnetic bar codes, portable optical scanner pens and computers. The system is similar to those used on products at grocery stores. BLM-Alaska led in the development of this system, which is now being adopted by many other BLM offices nationwide.

Biologists have been tracking large game animals for years by using radio collars and airplanes. New developments in electronics allow the same techniques to be applied to fish. Tiny transmitters were surgically implanted in steelhead trout allow radio monitoring to identify critical fish habitat in portions of the Copper River basin. Another type of monitoring system helps BLM keep track of aircraft flying anywhere in the state.

Remote sensors around the state instantly record lightning strikes and relay the information to a central computer. Resource specialists' predictions of where wildfires are most likely to occur allow fire fighting crews to be stationed in high-risk areas, cutting response time and saving thousands of dollars annually in fire suppression costs. The lightning detectors were modified to help the U. S. Geological Survey monitor volcanic eruptions on Mt. Redoubt.

# BLM Lands In Alaska



## Public Lands administered by the BLM

**NOTE:** This map is for general reference purposes only. Scattered parcels of public land and private inholdings are not shown. Land ownership patterns are subject to change pending resolution of State of Alaska and Native land claims. Contact the nearest BLM office for detailed land ownership information.



# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

400 WILLOUGHBY AVE.  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1798  
PHONE: (907) 465-2400

February 20, 1990

The Honorable Bettye Fahrenkamp  
Alaska State Senator  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, AK 99811

Re: SJR 65

Dear Senator Fahrenkamp:

Many of the programs of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that benefit the state are being seriously underfunded. Two of these programs, the lands conveyance and cadastral survey programs, are very important to us. If properly funded, BLM would be able to expedite land transfers to us that were mandated by Congress over 30 years ago.

As the attached charts show, we have seen a decline in the quantity and quality of land conveyances to the state over the last decade. The state still has 20 million acres of land to be conveyed to us under the Alaska Statehood Act, and an additional 70 million acres remain to be surveyed before we can receive patent.

Currently the lands conveyance program is funded at \$13.66 million and in 1991 is expected to go down to \$13.18 million. An optimum budget of \$16.65 million would allow BLM to keep up with inflation, streamline the adjudicative process through use of automation, fund to their authorized staff level, and fund an unauthorized use program and an easement management program.

The cadastral survey budget is currently funded at \$15.2 million. In 1991 this level is expected to be at \$13.3 million. An optimum level of \$18.1 would allow BLM to get the Patent Plan Process back on track by bringing staff back up to its authorized level, fund full contracting capability which is important to the private sector in Alaska, and fund new equipment which would make their production much more efficient and cost effective.

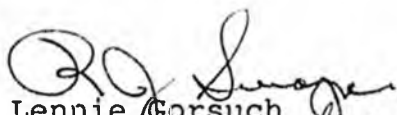
Senator Fahrenkamp

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February 20, 1990

Therefore, I support SJR 65. Please feel free to contact my office if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

  
Lennie Gorsuch  
Commissioner

Attachments

cc: Bill Sponsors  
Committee Members  
Bob Evans, Legislative Liaison  
Office of the Governor  
Denby Lloyd, Special Staff Assistant  
Office of the Governor  
Gary Gustafson, Director  
Division of Land and Water  
Department of Natural Resources

## FISCAL NOTE

**REQUEST:**

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title: SJR 65 urging appropriate funding  
           of BLM  
 Sponsor: Sen. Sturqulewski  
 Requestor: Senate Resources

Agency Affected: Dept. Natural Resources  
 BRU: Land Management  
 Components: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)**

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>CAPITAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>REVENUE</b>						

**FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)**

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
<b>TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

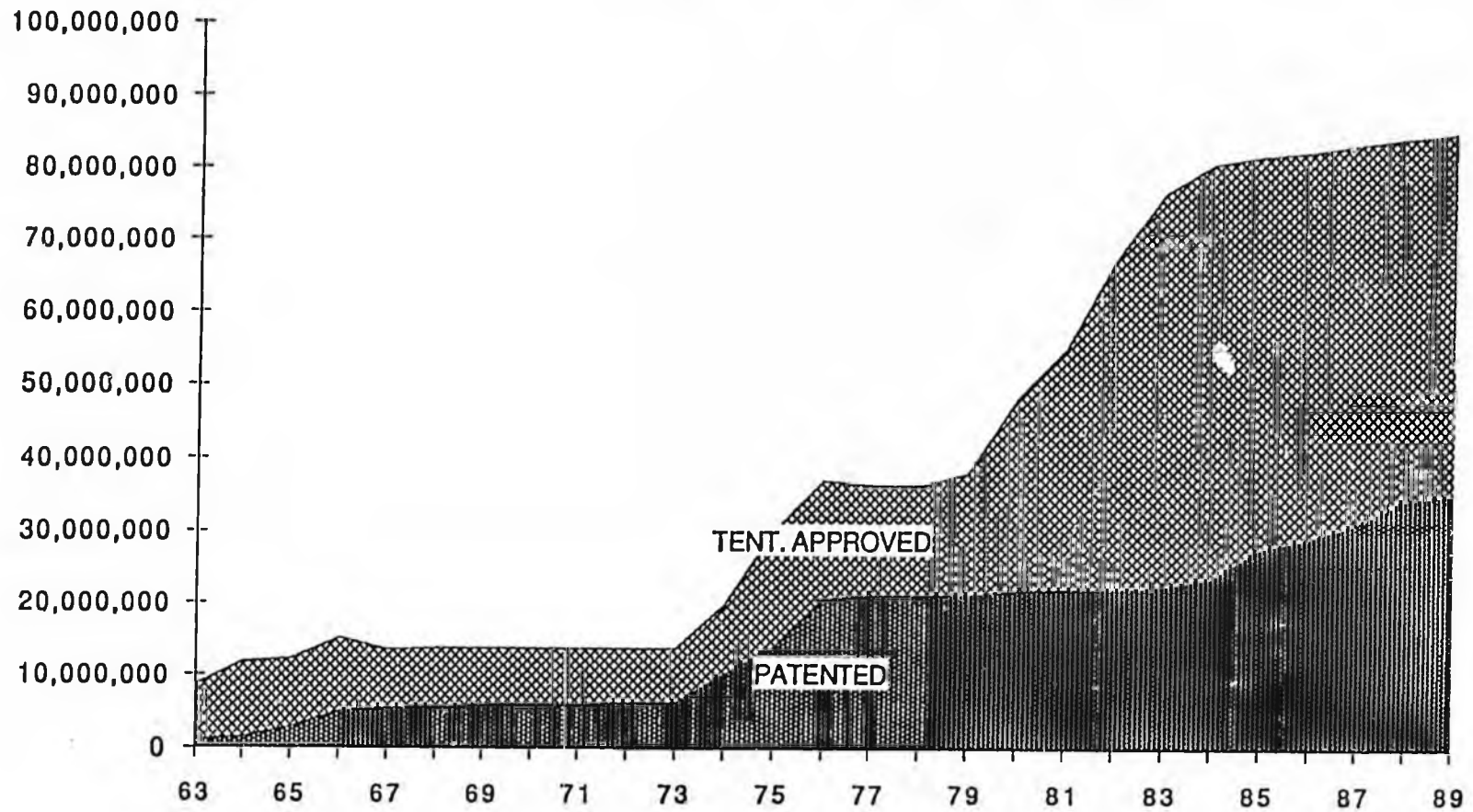
**ANALYSIS :** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Larry Ostrovsky Phone: 465-2400  
 Division: Commissioner's Office Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Commissioner:  Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

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# LANDS CONVEYED TO THE STATE



# CONVEYANCE HISTORY - GENERAL GRANT

