

Testimony in Support of Amendment to LD 585

Good morning, Chairwoman Carney, Chairman Harnett and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is **Clarissa Sabattis, Chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians**, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to **testify in support of the amendment to LD 585**, An Act To Restore to the Penobscot Nation and Passamaquoddy Tribe the Authority To Exercise Jurisdiction under the Federal Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010

I'd like to recognize the work that has taken place with the Governor's office and AG's office on the specific topics in this legislation. While this bill does not tackle all the areas that we have been hoping to see movement on, it is a great first step. A first step towards improving tribal state relations. A first step towards building trust between the State of Maine and our tribe. A first step towards providing economic benefits to our community and our neighboring communities. A first step towards being able to try to resolve what some people feel are insurmountable issues, but I do not.

Our tribe does not have tax benefits, therefore we are left without any type of tax base to supplement Maliseet programs, such as housing, education, social services, and health. This bill would place provisions within Maine statute to allow for taxation benefits and certain exemptions on tribal lands. While this legislation would not alter the Settlement Act, it is consistent with how taxation would apply under Federal Indian Law.

This bill would provide some equity to the tribes around gaming. While we have been excluded from the ability to have casinos in Maine, and this legislation would NOT allow us to have a casino, this would allow us to have rights to mobile sports betting. Unlike large out of state corporations whose profits leave the state of Maine, the portion of funds raised through sports gaming that are retained with the tribes would be used to supplement underfunded programs for our citizens, and to strengthen and build an economic infrastructure for sustainable funding for the tribe. Not only will profits stay in Maine. Revenues will benefit the entire state of Maine through the funding cascade, just as the bricks and mortar casino cascade does.

Consultation and collaboration are at the heart of all our relationships with other governments. The Mills' administration will be filling a void that the previous administrations have left behind with the passage of the amendment to LD 585. This will provide a structure for communication between the State and the Tribes, that fosters working collaboratively on issues.

Please join me in support of LD 585, a step in the right direction for tribal state relations.