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THE MAINE SENATE
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Testimony in Support of LD 2094
An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Friday, February 14, 2020

Senator Carpenter, Representative Bailey and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Troy Jackson and I have the honor of serving as the President of the Maine Senate and of representing northern Aroostook County. I am here today to lend my full support to LD 2094, An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act.

To begin, I would like not only to recognize the amazing work the Task Force has undertaken and accomplished but to also recognize the group that made this Task Force a reality. The Task Force was officially created last June by Joint Order, but it was conceived by the work of a dedicated group of stakeholders early in the first session. These stakeholders, which included tribal leaders, legislators, administrators, and policy and legal representatives, met many times and worked cooperatively to lay the groundwork for the Task Force. This original group added focus, parameters, and direction to ensure the Task Force had the time and support staff necessary to write this important legislation.

The Task Force met diligently throughout the summer months and even into this session working through complex, multifaceted issues that impact both the tribal and nontribal citizenry of this state. Much like the original stakeholder group, the Task Force included Maine Tribal Leaders, state lawmakers, and representatives from the Governor's Office, Attorney General's Office and the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission. The public hearings and work sessions lasted for hours and because of the commitment of those present, the Task Force was able to put forth a meaningful and comprehensive bill. The Task Force's accomplishment, LD 2094, cannot be overstated. With this proposed legislation, there is a real opportunity to right

past wrongs, establish a viable working relationship based on mutual understanding between the State and the Tribes, and avoid future controversies.

This legislation was carefully crafted to ensure our Maine tribal nations are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. I recognize there will be many who follow me who can share the specifics of this bill with more accuracy and authority than me. But I wanted to take a moment to recognize the incredible work and commitment of the Task Force. We are better because of your dedication to a successful outcome and your willingness to reach common ground. Thank you.