



PRESBYTERY OF NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND

Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
**An Act to Implement the Recommendations of
The Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act**
February 9, 2022

Senator Carney, Representative Harnett and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rev. Candice Provey and I am writing on behalf of the Leadership Commission of the Presbytery of Northern New England for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Presbytery includes six member churches and one fellowship community in the state of Maine. I am testifying on behalf of the Commission **in support of LD 1626.**

We support the sovereignty of the indigenous tribes of the Wabanaki alliance in Maine, and support the recommended changes to the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act, which deprived them of their inherent right to sovereignty—a right other tribes in the United States currently have.

In 2016, the 222nd General Assembly of the PC(U.S.A.), our highest governing body, repudiated the doctrine of discovery and its use to appropriate land and expropriate valuable resources, while dispossessing and oftentimes enslaving Indigenous peoples. In 2018, the Stated Clerk, our chief executive, called on us all to recognize the role of the church in the cultural assimilation and forced relocation of Indigenous peoples, the persistent undermining of tribal sovereignty, and the denial of these actions as part of American history and our church history. As a church complicit in or supportive of these violations of their humanity, and the continuing impact of our decisions on their future, we, as Presbyterians, have much for which to repent.

We reaffirm our commitment to true justice and stand in solidarity with all Indigenous peoples in their efforts for sovereignty and human rights. We support their right to self-determination, self-governance, and self-sufficiency. We call on the people of Maine and the legislators who represent them to recognize their tribal sovereignty and remove the impediments preventing them from exercising their full rights and responsibilities as self-governing tribal nations.

Rev. Candice Provey, Resource Presbyter
Rev. T. J. DeMarco, Stated Clerk
Rev. Carl Hilton VanOsdall, Leadership Commission Chair