

Barbara Baker  
Bradley  
LD 2004

Dear Judiciary Committee,

My name is Barbara Baker from Bradley, Maine.

I did not live here when the Settlement Act was signed into law; in 1980, I lived on the Salish, Kootenai and Pend d'Oreille tribal land in Montana where the tribes built an economy over the past 40+ years from a college without walls into a campus conferring doctorates, built by its own building trades students; where the tribes made strides in economic development, healthcare, housing, environmental protections, disaster response, and development of tribal government services.

When I came here to Dawnland, it took years and Dr Kalt's Harvard Wabanaki study for me to pinpoint why so much less growth took place here than on the land I had just been on (9 percent average per capita gross domestic product growth compared to 61 percent in the period). It was the particular part of the Settlement Act that restricted access to the over 151 federal laws meant for them that the other approximately 570 federally recognized tribes were using for self-governance.

I am so happy to see that LD 2004 will address Section 6(h) and 16(b) to redress, clarify, and result in a new understanding between all parties involved.

I personally benefited from the tribal economy in Montana not only because I was a tribal employee, but also because the tribe operated the water and irrigation systems, the power came from the dam they now own, they have maintained the pristine air quality, and the surrounding rural area thrives for non-tribal as well as for tribal members.

But, this is where I make my home now. And when you pass this Beneficial bill, the next 40+ years will be your legacy as supporters of this economic engine and virtuous act to restore what all the other federally recognized tribes have benefited from to the Wabanaki Nations. Please vote "ought to pass" on LD 2004.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this request.