

My name is Caron Chess, residing on Peaks Island. I strongly support LD2004

Unfortunately, the Wabanaki have not benefitted from more than 150 federal laws that apply to all the other tribes in the U.S. The Wabanaki tribes in Maine are treated differently than the other 570 federally recognized tribes.

As a result, not only the Wabanaki but their rural geographic neighbors have failed to benefit economically from federal laws. LD2004 will ensure that the Wabanaki, and by extension Mainers near the tribes, get the same infusion of federal dollars as the other 570 tribes.

This economic reality alone should be sufficient reason to enact LD2004. Consider the Stafford Act, which allows tribes to directly seek federal disaster relief. In addition, Wabanaki would benefit from EPA funding for improving the environment, which will no doubt benefit nearby residents.

Another example of the 150 federal laws from which Wabanaki can't benefit include the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, which allows tribes to employ much-needed medical professionals who are licensed in another state.

This legislation doesn't circumvent the 1980's Settlement Act. It would change a provision in the Settlement Act that would at least begin the process of placing the tribes in Maine on the same footing as the other 570 federally recognized tribes.

Caron Chess  
Peaks Island  
LD 2004

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