



# SIERRA CLUB

## MAINE CHAPTER

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**To:** Committee on Judiciary

**From:** Sierra Club Maine

**Date:** 6/1/2023

**Re:** Testimony in Support of **LD 2004: *An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations***

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Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, I am testifying on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge you to vote 'Ought to Pass' for LD 2004.

LD 2004 aims to address key shortcomings in the current treatment of the Wabanaki tribes. Because of the 1980 Settlement Act, the Wabanaki tribes in Maine are treated differently than the other 570 federally recognized tribes across the country. When Congress passes federal legislation that impacts tribes nationwide, the Maine tribes must be explicitly written into the law, unlike the other federally recognized tribes. This is an excessive burden to the tribes. They do not have the resources to track all federal legislation and lobby Congress to include them in each piece of legislation.

The Sierra Club nationally is committed to actively promoting and advocating for the rights of Indigenous peoples, and aims to build power for Tribal partners at the grassroots and all levels of government. We recognize the intersection of our mission with environmental justice - the exploitation of lands goes hand in hand with the exploitation of people.<sup>1</sup> When the Wabanaki thrive through the better realization of environmental justice, and, in particular, the enjoyment of Federal benefits afforded all other tribes in this country, we all benefit.

LD 2004 will make right one consequence of the 1980 Settlement Act, a change that would at least begin the process of placing the tribes in Maine on the same footing as the other 570 federally recognized tribes<sup>2</sup>. Please support LD 2004 to start putting the tribes and rural Maine on a path to prosperity.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sierraclub.org/equity/journey/indigenous-rights>

<sup>2</sup> LD 2004 would allow the recognized tribes of Maine to enjoy the benefits of Federal law conferring benefits to all other Federally recognized tribes but will not allow Federal law to supersede Maine law with respect to gaming, gambling, crime or juvenile crime

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright  
Legislative & Political Specialist  
Sierra Club Maine