

Testimony of the Wabanaki Alliance in support of
LD 1835 An Act to Require the State to Notify Indian Tribes and Indian Nations When New
Laws Are Enacted That Need to Be Certified

Presented for the Public Hearing Before the Maine Legislature's Judiciary Committee
January 10, 2024

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, Passamaquoddy Tribal Representative Dana, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary; my name is John Dieffenbacher-Krall. I reside in Old Town, and I am the Executive Director of the [Wabanaki Alliance](#). The group was founded in June 2020 by the four Wabanaki Nations principally living in five communities in what we today call the State of Maine, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Mi'kmaq Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik, and Penobscot Nation. The Wabanaki Alliance was created to educate the people of Maine about the need for securing the inherent sovereignty of Wabanaki Nations.

The Wabanaki Alliance supports LD 1835. We thank Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross for introducing this bill.

The approval or rejection by Wabanaki Nations of laws enacted by the State of Maine that “expressly references or applies” to one or more Wabanaki Nation should be absolutely clear and not subject to possible dispute. Any process or requirements established by the State of Maine to delineate the manner of approval should fully respect Wabanaki sovereignty and not involve the State of Maine dictating to Wabanaki Nations thereby perpetuating colonial aspects of the relationship.

LD 1835 amends existing Maine law originally enacted in 1983. At that time, the Penobscot Nation was using the term governor to identify the top executive of its government. Many years ago, the Penobscot Nation stopped using that descriptor in favor of chief. As the Judiciary Committee considers this bill, I urge you to consult directly with Penobscot Nation representatives to learn if they want that term changed.

I urge the committee to vote ought to pass in favor of this bill.