

Jacqui Deveneau
Portland
LD 2007

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jacqui Deveneau and I am submitting my testimony on behalf of Maine Green Independent Party. I am testifying in support of LD 2007.

The Maine Green Independent Party is a long time supporter of the Maine Wabanaki, having some of members serving on our State Committee. We strongly believe that it is way past time for the Wabanaki Nations in Maine to be able to exercising their inherent right to self govern, as all other federally recognized tribes in the United States are able to do under Federal Indian Law.

For those who may not know, Tribal sovereignty refers to the inherent authority of tribal nations to self-govern, including the authority to establish their own form of government, determine citizenship, preserve cultural identity, provide government services, and make and enforce laws.

Since 1980, Congress has enacted more than 150 federal laws for the benefit of tribal nations, and Maine has fought to block access to many of them. Without the access to policies, programs, and funding that build and support self-governance, economic growth in the Wabanaki Nations they lag severely in economic development.

Among the rights denied to the tribes in Maine are:

The right to exercise criminal jurisdiction over all categories of crimes committed by Native Americans on tribal lands.

The right to legislate and adjudicate civil regulatory issues arising on tribal lands, such as the right to enact and enforce environmental quality controls or to regulate on-reservation businesses.

The right to levy and collect taxes.

The right to conduct gaming in collaboration with state and local governments.

The right to be immune from lawsuits by private individuals and state governments.

The right to acquire reservation and trust lands without the consent of local and state governments.

The Maine Green Independent Party understands that passing LD 2007 is about fairness and equity. Recognizing the Wabanaki Nations' inherent right to self-govern helps move the Wabanaki Nations and the state of Maine forward together, with improved economic opportunity, careful stewardship of the land, and renewed partnership among neighbors.

In closing I would like to thank the sponsor of LD 2007, Maine House Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross and the co-sponsoring bipartisan group of more than 100 legislators, including Senate President Troy Jackson and House Minority Leader Billy Bob Faulkingham.