

James Matlack
Camden, ME
LD 2007

TO: Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Joint
Standing Committee on the Judiciary
FROM: James Matlack, 5 Duck Pond Road, Camden, ME 04843
RE: Support for LD2007 AN ACT TO ADVANCE SELF-DETERMINATION
FOR

WABANAKI NATIONS

I write to urge members of the Judiciary Committee to give full support for and to vote "ought to pass" on LD2007.

I am a Quaker with a lifelong concern for the wellbeing of tribal peoples in the U.S. I am also Clerk of Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy—a statewide network of Quaker activists. Quakers have a long history of seeking to protect the rights of Native Americans back to the days of William Penn in the 1600's. We have not always acted wisely but have consistently tried to respect the dignity and rights of Indigenous peoples.

As you probably know, LD2007 as amended is the current version of an omnibus bill intended to implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Indian Claims Settlement Act. As shown in extensive testimony before the committee, the Wabanaki tribes in Maine were short-changed by prior legislation. They have been denied the full measure of self-determination and benefits of Congressional legislation that some 570 other Federally-recognized tribes enjoy.

This is a denial of basic fairness and equity. It also hampers economic development among the Maine tribes who have been crippled by comparison with all other tribes in the U.S. (SEE the relevant study by the Kennedy School at Harvard.) When the tribes suffer or prosper in economic terms, the towns and rural areas around them also suffer or benefit. To deny the Wabanaki their full rights also condemns their neighbors to economic hardship.

It is time to remedy the defects of the 1980 law, to restore to the Wabanaki their rightful degree of self-determination and the benefits of Congressional actions, and to enhance the economic health of all Mainers.

I ask that the Judiciary Committee vote "ought to pass" on LD2007

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