Jeremy Litchfield
BIG Acts Brunswick, Maine
LD 2007

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

From: Jeremy Litchfield, 20 Union St, Brunswick, ME 04011

Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jeremy Litchfield and I live in Brunswick. I am also one of the owners of a Maine business, BIG Acts. I writing this to testify in support of LD 2007.

For me, passing LD 2007 is all about fairness and equity. Due to restrictions imposed by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA), the Wabanaki Nations have been kept from achieving the significant economic growth experienced by the other 570 federal tribes over the past 40 years who've had full access to federal policies of self-determination. Removing those obstacles would help the Wabanaki Nations take advantage of federal self-determination policies, programs and funding that elsewhere in Indian Country led to the creation of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in goods and services produced by Native businesses.

But it is not just the Wabanki people who would benefit from passing LD 2007. By modernizing MICSA, Harvard researchers say the Wabanaki Nations could become the economic engines of their regions, creating new opportunities for jobs and income growth for themselves and rural Maine. According to the recent Harvard Report, self-government for the tribes would likely mean an additional $330 million a year in Maine's Gross Domestic Product, more than 2,700 jobs, and $39 million a year in state and local tax revenue. Based on the experience of other tribes, better than half the new jobs created are likely to be filled by neighbors of Wabanaki tribes in rural Maine.

It's time to modernize this broken deal and begin a new era of partnership with the Wabanaki Nations for the betterment of everyone in Maine. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Litchfield