

Krista Watson
BREWER
LD 2007

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

My name is Krista Watson and I live in Brewer. I'm writing today to express my support for LD 2007 and a sovereign Wabanaki Nation. The 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act has not been an appropriate tool to help the Wabanaki in self-determination. It's time to remove the barriers that have kept the Wabanaki, along with their neighbors in rural Maine, from achieving the economic growth achieved over the past 40 years by 570 federal tribes across Indian Country.

According to the U.S. Census data in 2019, childhood poverty rates within Wabanaki communities range from a low of 40% at the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk community to a high of 77% for the Mi'kmaq Nation in Aroostook County. Maine's childhood poverty rate for the same period is 15%.

The Wabanaki have been protecting the environment and maintaining sustainable ecological practices for millennia, long before European settlement of Maine. They will continue to do so; it's their heritage and birthright as According to a recent Harvard Report, self-government for the tribes would likely mean \$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. I urge you to do all that you can, including convincing Governor Mills, to pass this legislation. It's simply the right thing to do.

Respectfully,

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