

Carl Costanzi
Norway
LD 2007

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

From: Carl Costanzi, Ph.D., 24 Penn Road, Norway ME 04268

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

Intro: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name
is Carl Costanzi and I live in Norway. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

Testimony: As President of the Board of Directors of the Western Foothills Land
Trust I've had the privilege of working with other conservation organizations across
the state through the First Light Learning Journey to expand Wabanaki access and
relationship to land for the prosperity and wellbeing of our tribal neighbors. We do
this through listening, relationship and trust building and resource sharing.

One of the many things I've learned on this journey is the gross injustice of the 1980
Maine Land Claim Settlement Implementing Act. As a result of this Act Maine is the
only state in the US that doesn't recognize and respect the inherent sovereignty of the
federally recognized Wabanaki Nations. As a result, they have limited abilities to
govern themselves and determine their own future. With the Act the state of Maine, in
essence, appointed themselves caretakers of a sovereign people. They have also not
been able to benefit from many federal laws passed since 1980.

With colonization, the people who had lived and stewarded the land we now call
Maine, whose culture has always been rooted in relationship to the land, were either
killed or displaced, refugees in their own home. They now legally steward only 1.2%
of their ancestral lands. The fact that we don't respect this historical relationship and
don't recognize the inherent sovereignty of the tribal nations that were here long
before white came and subjugated them to refugee status is unjust.

The people of the sovereign nations of the Wabanaki are our neighbors. They are part
of what is now the community of Maine. Their dignity, prosperity, and wellbeing
benefit all of us. It is a simple request to recognize that sovereignty. It is shameful that
Maine is the only state that withholds that recognition.

Closing: The Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission, created by the 1980 Maine
Implementing Act to continually review its effectiveness, found that the Settlement
Acts "created structural inequities that have resulted in conditions that have risen to
the level of human rights violations." The Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian
Claims Settlement Implementing Act did a wonderful job in coming to consensus on
correcting the 1980 Act, informing LD 2007. I strongly urge you for the benefit of the
entire state to pass LD 2007. Thank you very much for your service, time, and
consideration.