

Noami Brautigam
Monroe
LD 2007

To Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Noami Brautigam and I live in Monroe where I own and operate Second Frost Farm. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations.

I believe it is absolutely crucial that the state of Maine take this step to affirm Wabanaki tribes' inherent sovereignty.

It is past time for the state of Maine to act on reforming tribal-state relations. This is such an important opportunity for the state to address historic harms and put an end to preventing tribal access to federal self-determination policies that are so clearly benefiting 570 other tribes. Implementing this foundational bill should be top priority.

Over the past couple of years a number of our friends and farming peers were blindsided by the discovery of PFAS (also known as forever chemicals) contaminating their drinking water, the land they farm and their bodies. Decades of state sponsored spreading of sludge on agricultural fields has poisoned our communities and caused major challenges to local food security. I am heartbroken and angry and scared. And I am learning more and more about how Juniper Ridge Landfill owned by Casella Waste Systems is actively dumping leachate containing PFAS into the Penobscot River, threatening the health of Penobscot people who have a sovereign inherent right to practice sustenance fishing.

The reason I bring PFAS contamination up at this hearing is because in contrast, for a millennium, the tribes in Maine have been such careful stewards of the land. I believe in tribal sovereignty. And also, securing Wabanaki tribes' future by formally acknowledging their inherent sovereignty will help protect the environment we not only call home, but we farmers rely on to produce healthy food for our communities.

I hope passing LD 2007 is just the beginning of the state honoring the people whose land we all live upon. As a farmer, a landowner and a Maine citizen, please count me as one of many urging you to vote in support of LD 2007.

Noami Brautigam
Monroe, Maine