

Testimony in support of LD 2007 *An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations*

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

From: Janet Hough, 401 S Edmunds Rd, Edmunds Twp ME 04628

Date: February 23, 2024

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Janet Hough. I live in Edmunds Township, in Washington County, in the districts of Senator Marianne Moore and Representative Kenneth Davis. I am a Quaker and retired educator.

I am in support of the changes that will follow from passage of LD 2007 *An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations*. As you know, this bill resulted from the diligent work of the 2019 bipartisan task force of Tribal leaders, Maine legislators and state officials. Over the course of many months, they reviewed the effectiveness of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act. In 2020, they came to consensus regarding 22 recommendations.

Passage of LD 2007 will lead to implementation of many of those recommendations, covering tribal court jurisdiction; hunting, fishing, and natural resource regulation on tribal land; taxation authority; and trust land acquisition. The changes will bring the rights and authority of all four Wabanaki Nations (Passamaquoddy Tribe, Penobscot Nation, Mi'kmaq Nation, and Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians) in line with the other 570 federally recognized Tribes in the United States

In states which abide by Federal Indian law, new and increasingly productive relationships are unfolding. By contrast, Maine's relationship with the Wabanaki has continued to be paternalistic and restrictive. This has resulted in lawsuits, anger, and frustration. It is time for the State of Maine to acknowledge and respect that the Wabanaki Nations in Maine have an inherent right to self-govern.

Currently, the injustices of past centuries hang over us all, blocking much needed healing and change for the Wabanaki Tribes and the communities around them. Passage of LD 2007 will lead to a better course for us all. The Tribes will be able to act as the stewards of the lands and waters that they are responsible for, and determine their own economic development. Rural Mainers will prosper right along with the Tribes; Maine will be a better place for us to live.

Let us work together to establish a new culture of respect and caring for one another, of honorable dealings and collaboration with the First People of this land. This is what is expected of us, by both history and law, if we are to achieve retrospective justice in our society.

I thank you for your time and for your dedication to your work.