

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: Coleen O'Connell, 47 Village Road, Belfast, ME 04915

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

My name is Coleen O'Connell and I live in Belfast. I am a retired Ecology Professor and serve on multiple non-profit organization Boards in the state of Maine. I am submitting this testimony as a private citizen who has been an ally of Indigenous people since my college years. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

I am personally embarrassed that our state is so out of touch with the social justice advances that have been made for our Native American citizens in the past 50 years. The state of Maine has continued, through the racism of our Governor, to keep the Wabanaki people of our state from receiving the full benefits of being sovereign nations within our federal system. As a Democrat, I am personally offended by her lack of progressive thinking.

There are multiple good reasons to pass LD 2207, both economically and ecologically. I feel that Wabanaki tribes are poised to do incredible economic development in their regions while they protect the environment. We, the dominant colonizers, need to step out of our colonial minds and allow the Wabanaki to take charge of their own initiatives and profit economically from their efforts. When Wabanaki people thrive, we all thrive.

I thank the committee members for your diligent work on behalf of the Wabanaki people of our state. We cannot waste any more time in advancing their rights to self-determination. Thank you for this opportunity to share my opinions and thoughts.

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