

Katherine Rhoda
Hiram
LD 2007

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: Katherine Rhoda, 299 Hiram Hill Road (PO Box 58), Hiram, ME 04041

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is
Katherine Rhoda. I reside in Hiram. I'm testifying in support of LD 2007.

I fail to see what public purpose is served by systematically excluding the tribes of
Maine from federal legislation affecting each and every other federally recognized
tribe. To single out Maine tribes in this way is unfair on the face of it and very
burdensome to the tribes. To make an analogy, I'm glad my own town of Hiram
doesn't have to lobby to be explicitly included in each piece of State legislation!

To disadvantage the tribes in this way is also to disadvantage their neighboring
communities, who stand to benefit from the economic development which will likely
follow once access to federal tribal benefits is unlocked.

As the 2022 report on the economic impact of the 1980 Settlement Acts on the
Wabanaki Nations and surrounding communities by the Harvard Project on American
Indian Economic Development (now the Project on Indigenous Governance and
Development) at the Harvard Kennedy School put it: "Subjecting the Wabanaki
Nations' capacities to the restrictions of MISCA [the Maine Indian Claims Settlement
Act] stifles substantial development opportunities – to the detriment of both the
Wabanaki and non-Wabanaki citizens of Maine. The unrealized opportunities
measure in the hundreds of millions of dollars of GDP for the state, representing
support for thousands of jobs held by Mainers and tens of millions of dollars going
into Maine's tribal, state, and local treasuries."

That said, the situation of the Maine tribes is much more than an economic issue. It's
a moral one, a matter of justice. It is simply wrong to deny them the opportunities for
self-determination that every other federally recognized tribe in the country enjoys.
You have a golden opportunity to help correct the situation. Please do the right thing
and support LD 2007.

Thank you for your time, your attention, and your public service!