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Bar Harbor  
LD 2007

I am a plant restoration biologist living in Bar Harbor, working for Acadia National Park, on the unceded territory and homeland of the Wabanaki people. I strongly support the proposed changes to the outdated 1980 Settlement Act and support restoring the recognition of the Wabanaki Nations' inherent "rights, privileges, powers, duties and immunities" that belong to them, as they belong to other federally recognized Indian tribes within the United States.

As someone whose entire job is restoring the beloved mountain summits and meadows of Acadia National Park, I cannot imagine these restoration projects ever succeeding in the face of climate change without Wabanaki leadership. To ensure that Maine's amazing ecosystems and landscape are protected in the climate crisis, the first steps are obvious: honor the sovereignty of the Tribes that have stewarded this place since time immemorial and prioritize Wabanaki ecological knowledge. Everyone that cares about the environmental conservation movement in Maine, or about the environmental tourism industry of "Vacationland", benefits from listening to Wabanaki leadership.

LD 2007 provides this state with the opportunity to do the right thing, after centuries of violent and deplorable mistakes by the government in its relationship with the Wabanaki Nations. I urge this committee not to squander it.