

**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:** Anne Henshaw, 346 Bunganuc Road, Brunswick, Maine 04011.

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

My name is Anne Henshaw and I live in Brunswick. I am a managing partner for the Indigenous Peoples Initiative, an organization dedicated to advancing the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples across the Arctic. I am also a long-time resident of the State of Maine who cares deeply about the many diverse communities who call the state home. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

I have spent my professional life in Maine working at Bowdoin College and in the field of philanthropy supporting needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples across the country and globally, including the Wabanaki. I am always inspired by the generosity of Wabanaki I meet despite the hardships they have faced during the last 500 years and more recently since the passage of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act in 1980. There is so much the Wabanaki have to offer our state in the form of jobs, stewardship of our lands and waters, and education if given a fair chance to do so.

Due to restrictions imposed by the *1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA)*, the Wabanaki Nations have been kept from achieving the significant economic growth experienced by the other 570 federal tribes over the past 40 years who've had full access to federal policies of self-determination. It's time to remove the barriers that have kept the Wabanaki, along with their neighbors in rural Maine, from achieving the dramatic and sustained economic growth along with the other federal tribes across Indian Country.

The politicians who drafted the 1980 Settlement Act called it a "living document" that should not be set in stone as it has been for more than 40 years to the detriment of the Wabanaki and rural Maine communities and the state of Maine. Bottom line: MICSA provides for the State of Maine, Passamaquoddy Tribe and Penobscot Nation to amend the law within broad areas. It's time to modernize this broken deal and begin a new era of partnership with the Wabanaki Nations for the betterment of everyone in Maine.

By modernizing MICSA, Harvard researchers say the Wabanaki Nations could become the economic engines of their regions, creating new opportunities for jobs and income growth for themselves and rural Maine.

I want to thank all the members of the Judiciary Committee for their thoughtful consideration of LD 2007. It is a critical moment in the history of our State to truly embrace all that the Tribes can contribute to our shared future if sovereignty is fully recognized. I ask you please vote in favor of LD 2007.