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I have been following the travails of Wabanaki self-determination (as both a tenured PhD anthropologist and a human rights advocate) since moving to Maine in 1994. I first lived for several years with the family of Chief Ranco in Wells, Maine. Through this experience, which over the years has included learning about many of the life ways on Indian Island; payments to various Wabanaki tribes for both successful and unsuccessful business ventures; and long discussions about research at the University of Maine on the details which resulted when the Wabanaki Nations were NOT granted rights to sovereignty that were granted to all other nations in the United States.

I have read many of the articles and UMaine theses on what did and did not take place as a result of reparations payments given. In effect, though, the Wabanaki Nations were not given the equality element of self-determination even when it became more and more obvious that as citizens of the United States, this is a right that tribal members are entitled to. They are being treated as if they were/are "lesser" and it is criminal to think that their stewardship of land and water and self-determination has not been granted.

In these times, in particular, this is an embarrassment for our state. I have often felt somewhat paternalistic stereotypes coming from certain aspects of our State government that do not align with the knowledge flow of tribal members, Wabanaki leadership must be central in decisions about climate/water/land practices. Respect and references to information implicit in tribal mythologies, strategies, management ideals, and other deep knowledge of the land and its many resources provide invaluable enhancement to political environmental strategies in our State. They must be given the right to Self-determination. It is an embarrassment that Maine has not done this yet.