

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

My name is Clifton Page. I live in East Blue Hill, part of the Town of Blue Hill, on former Penobscot Nation land. Ours is a coastal village with ancient shell middens found along the shoreline. It was part of the area our Native Nations came to during the summer months to harvest from the sea. I have spoken to residents of this village, now long gone, who remembered the Penobscot family who each summer, into the 1930s, came to our village, camped in our little village park and carried on their traditional life.

In Maine, our Native Nations have been badly treated for many decades. Their treaties have been broken, their land confiscated, their promised independence and sovereignty removed, leaving them in poverty and poor health. Starting in the 1940s, the US Supreme Court did all it could to 'integrate' Native Nations into America by ignoring long-standing court decisions and the long history of our government that promised Native Nations their freedom and sovereignty over Indian Country in return for giving up their claim to the land on which we now all live. I strongly recommend reading The Erosion of Tribal Power by Dewi Ioan Ball.

The State of Maine continues these wrongs under the terms of the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Act. Our Native Nations, though treaties and laws starting with the birth of this nation, are the guardians of the federal government, whose responsibility it is to assure the welfare and rights of the Native Nations. Legally, it is not the purview of State governments to control our Native Nations.

It is time our State undoes the terms of the 1980 Act and return to our Native Tribes their right to self-determination, free of State of Maine laws, their right to receive the Federal Funding denied them by the State, their right to negotiate directly with the federal government, free of State pressure or influence, their right to economic freedom unhindered by State of Maine regulations and laws, their right to collect taxes to fund their tribal government, their right to determine how best to manage their lands without the meddling of the State. All these rights are enshrined in our national history, federal laws and treaties.

Maine has no place controlling the interests of our Native Tribes.

Yours sincerely,
Clifton Page

110 Curtis Cove Road Blue Hill Maine 04614

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Blue Hill
LD 2007

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