

Laura Simocko  
Portland  
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: Laura Simocko, 29 Parris Street #5, Portland, ME 04101

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Laura Simocko and I live in Portland. I was born and raised in Maine and I'm proud to live here because of the state's natural beauty, culture of independence and respect, and supportive communities. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

For me, passing LD 2007 is all about fairness and respect and helping communities across the state. I believe the Wabanaki Nations have the inherent right to self govern, like all other federally recognized tribes in the U.S. But because of the restrictions imposed by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, they haven't been able to take advantage of federal self-determination policies and achieve the significant economic growth experienced by their peers across the country. By removing these barriers, the Wabanaki Nations will become stronger and even more vibrant, which in turn will make all of our communities stronger and more vibrant.

I also believe that Wabanaki sovereignty will protect Maine's wild and scenic beauty and enhance the sustainable ecological practices we need as we adapt to climate change.

I am proud to be one of the thousands of Mainers who stand with the Wabanaki in support of their self-determination and endorse the 22 consensus recommendations reached by the bipartisan task force in 2020.

Thank you to the committee members.