

February 24, 2024

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

From: Holden Turner, 752 Hallowell-Litchfield Rd, West Gardiner, ME

Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

Dear Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee,

This is Holden Turner from West Gardiner, ME. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

I work on climate change and sea-level rise issues, both of which a strong constricting effect on livelihoods in Maine. For many years I have worked closely with growers and producers across the central part of our state. They feel the pinch from drought and wild weather, from late frosts and early springs. I am also tuned into the impacts being felt in these waters and forests as populations of moose and lobster, to name just two iconic species, are declining due to habitat changes caused by human pressures.

Listening to the Wabanaki is a step to healing from over-extractive land relations.

Wabanaki people have been maintaining good relations with this environment for millennia, and for this leadership and many other reasons they are long due recognition that grants their communities fairness and equity under federal law. Unlike the efforts to care for wild and wonderful places that other tribal communities have undertaken, the Wabanaki are not federally recognized and so cannot participate as readily in the cultural renaissance of Native America that has been bringing healthy environmental protection to all, including future generations.

For my colleagues working in rural Maine, Wabanaki self-determination is a win-win situation. Nourishing Native communities has spillover effects for jobs and self-production, as the recent Harvard report shows. Leaders from the community say that “When the Wabanaki thrive, rural Maine thrives.” Rural leaders are hoping for a better future for their communities. That starts with recognizing the driving value that each community can have.

For the committee, I strongly hope that you approve this legislation for the sake of our future communities, which are more and more restricted by rapid ecological changes. Wabanaki self-determination is one crucial catalyst needed to face these entangled social and environmental challenges.

Thank you for your consideration,
Holden Turner