

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: Kaolin Pitcher, 2 Fish Creek Rd, Deer Isle, ME 04627

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Kaolin Pitcher and I live on Deer Isle. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

We have never upheld our end of agreements that we made as a consolation prize after committing genocidal crimes for centuries, so shouldn't we start to mend whatever we have the power to as soon as we can? What a simple thing — the ability for a culture, a community, a place, thrive in a way that only *they* know how to provide for themselves. Why would we want to see the future of such a vibrant and tenacious community continue to be wrought with hardship and uncertainty? Shouldn't we make decisions that allow for those around us to thrive, the way we all want to thrive? If kindness is not innate but instead a muscle, why don't we start putting it to use? And perhaps if we start, we'll recognize that hatred is in fact a feeling and a concept that is not innate in us, but brought into being by trauma, and to rediscover the kindness and lifelong pursuit of joy that has lived within us since birth. We aren't born hateful and sticky-fingered, these things are learned.

It's time to end our centuries of tyranny wrought with generational trauma, pain, and displacement. It's time to acknowledge the way we harm others in order to feel safe, which is a long road that will bear no fruit. We need to relinquish what we think is control and recognize it for what it is: racism, violence, petulance, childishness. What if we could replace all our capitalist intent for choices made to ensure that *all* of us have access to everything that we need? What if we all felt safe and secure in our pursuit of everything from stable home space and daily meals to bodily safety to self-determination and sovereignty within our communities? What if instead of saying the laws don't allow for it, or that there isn't the money to do so, we realize how many laws have historically been trod over and continue to conveniently forgotten, to fit our own purposes and to gain access to more protections and resources, to the detriment of others?

What the Wabanaki Nation is suggesting is not complicated. It's time for us as settlers to respect that we have different values, different needs, and that they cannot thrive within the system that we have created and to which we expect all others near us to conform. What they ask for is not hard to grant, and it shouldn't be within anyone's power to grant this in the first place. Everyone deserves a life with as much space to explore, grow, practice, and flourish. Everyone on this planet has the right, from birth, to seek and find as much security, joy, purpose, and connection that they can. Indigenous sovereignty allows for the recognition of laws and customs and securities that have never been provided them through the systems white settlers have enforced throughout time. We already accept that cultures vary in this country from region to region, so why not within the different parts of our state? At a certain point we all have to admit that this really is all just common sense, and that if the Wabanaki thrive, we all thrive.

You don't need to understand the minute scientific details, for example, to know that a toxic trash dump isn't good for our water systems or any part of this place — it's just common sense.

I urge you stop thinking about the policy that exists and just use your compassion, empathy, and common sense. How can we change current policy to actually fit the needs of the people we claim to serve? And on a related note, how have some of your elders or ancestors struggled in ways that they shouldn't have had to? How can we ensure a present and future for anyone who asks that is void of any of these unnecessary hardships? Try to find within yourself some sympathetic understanding, and recognize how easy it is to respect such a simple ask within our community.

Thank you for your heartfelt consideration.

Kaolin Pitcher
Deer Isle
LD 2007

Hello! I submitted a written testimony a couple of days ago but it wasn't really completed and I forgot to include all formalities. Please discard my earlier submission if you can! Thank you!