

Nancy Olmstead  
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: Nancy Olmstead, 14 Berwick St, Portland, 04103.

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Nancy Olmstead and I live in Portland. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007. Due to restrictions imposed by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MISCA), the Wabanaki Nations have been kept from achieving the significant economic growth experienced by the other 570 federal tribes over the past 40 years who've had full access to federal policies of self-determination.

Removing those obstacles would help the Wabanaki Nations take advantage of federal self-determination policies, programs and funding that elsewhere in Indian Country led to the creation of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in goods and services produced by Native businesses. By modernizing MISCA, Harvard researchers say the Wabanaki Nations could become the economic engines of their regions, creating new opportunities for jobs and income growth for themselves and rural Maine. According to the recent Harvard Report, self-government for the tribes would likely mean an additional \$330 million a year in Maine's Gross Domestic Product, more than 2,700 jobs, and \$39 million a year in state and local tax revenue. Based on the experience of other tribes, better than half the new jobs created are likely to be filled by neighbors of Wabanaki tribes in rural Maine.

The politicians who drafted the 1980 Settlement Act called it a "living document" that should not be set in stone as it has been for more than 40 years to the detriment of the Wabanaki and rural Maine communities and the state of Maine. Bottom line: MISCA provides for the State of Maine, Passamaquoddy Tribe and Penobscot Nation to amend the law within broad areas. It's time to modernize this broken deal and begin a new era of partnership with the Wabanaki Nations for the betterment of everyone in Maine.

In closing, I urge you to support LD 2007 because it will lift the Tribal Nations into a better place where they can work effectively for their own prosperity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.