

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: Tamara Lee Pinard, 306 West Gray Road, Gray, ME 04039

February 24, 2024

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Tamara Lee Pinard and I live in Gray. I am a mother of two daughters, a board member of a local land trust, a Planning Board member in Gray, and a conservationist with over twenty-five years of experience restoring and protecting the natural resources of Maine. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

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. The Wabanaki have been protecting the environment and maintaining sustainable ecological practices for millennia, long before European settlement of Maine. They will continue to do so; it’s their heritage and birthright as Wabanaki. It’s time to remove the barriers that have kept the Wabanaki, along with their neighbors in rural Maine, from achieving the dramatic and sustained economic growth achieved over the past 40 years by 570 federal tribes across Indian Country.

The recommendations outlined in LD 2007 represent an important step toward recognizing the rights to self-determination and sovereignty of the Wabanaki Tribes in Maine, which I strongly support. I believe that tribal sovereignty is critical for the Tribes in Maine to achieve in order to regain their equal status to the 570 other federally recognized tribes in the US, to address the broken deal of the 1980 Settlement Act and begin a new era of partnership with the Wabanaki Nations for the betterment of everyone in Maine.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

Sincerely,
Tamara Lee Pinard