

Joel Horne
Appleton
LD 2007

Testimony in support of LD 2007 “An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations”

Attn: Judicial Committee chairs and members

My name is Joel Horne and I live in Appleton Maine on land once belonging to the Penobscot Nation. I feel strongly that our state must do more to support tribal sovereignty and see LD 2007 as a good first step in repairing relationships and building an equitable future that benefits all people living in Maine.

There are many examples that demonstrate the need for native populations to have control over their own lives. The biggest overarching I see is the ability to live and have equity. Living in Maine for white settler colonial folk is not “the way life should be” for we have commodified and exploited natural resources for hundreds of years to the detriment of all. Polluted waters poisoned land and animals we can no longer hunt for food. We have undone millenia of stewardship by native folks and never stopped to take stock of how we got here, just “what can we exploit now”. For Native Tribes, living here is an issue of culture, spiritual connection, and right to self determination. Things that we all think we have but things that are denied Native folk due to our own ignorance and disregard. We show disrespect for our land and when we are done poisoning and degrading it (Meddybemps) we let the tribes have it. How is this not showing disgraceful disrespect to Native populations - how is this the “way life should be”???

LD 2007 won't fix these long standing problems created by colonizers on Tribal Lands, but it can do many things. Allowing Maine tribes to be treated like the other 570 federally recognized tribes could do a lot to improve health and economic situations for them. We need to care about this. We need to stop spending money on lawsuits and allow for the creation of the “Bicentennial Accord” so we can repair the harm, get out of the way, and allow Maine tribes to control their own lives, communities and begin to heal. It's time to take our knees off of their necks, time for them to breathe. We all will benefit. Thank You