

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
From: Claire Horne, 773 Union Rd, Appleton, ME 04862
Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Claire Horne and I live in Appleton, Maine. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

I encourage your support of LD 2007 because it makes much needed changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act (MICSA). MICSA has restricted the ability for Wabanaki Nations to exercise their inherent rights of self-determination and to self-governance.

The Settlement Acts are like a dam holding back the flow of federal laws that should have reached the Wabanaki Tribes by now. Out of the 150+ laws that have been enacted to benefit tribal nations since MICSA was passed, the only federal law that has been extended to the Wabanaki Tribes is the Violence Against Women Act, 17 years after it had been initially enacted at the federal level. This example starts to illustrate how much the state of Maine is preventing the Wabanaki Nations from thriving. I think about all the Wabanaki tribal citizens who were denied the benefits of the Violence Against Women Act in those 17 years, who could've had those benefits 17 years earlier if not for MICSA. Then, I think about all the Wabanaki tribal citizens who are still not able to benefit from the other 150 federal laws today. The impacts are many and far reaching. As someone who cares deeply about equity, it disturbs me that Wabanaki Nations are not given access to the same policies, programs, and funding that the other 570 federally recognized tribes are. When it takes 17 years for the Wabanaki Nations to gain access to one federal law that the state of Maine has decided to implement, it's clear that this piecemeal process of passing laws issue by issue is woefully insufficient to addressing decades of unfair and inequitable treatment. We must go to the source of the blockage that is restricting justice and fairness for Wabanaki Nations. LD 2007 would do this by making changes to MICSA.

This is important to me personally because when the Wabanaki Nations have more opportunities for self-governance and economic growth, everyone in Maine benefits. Harvard University recently created a detailed report about the impacts of MICSA on Wabanaki Nations, and they found that recognizing Wabanaki self-government could generate an additional \$330 million a year in Maine's Gross Domestic Product and create 2,700+ jobs. MICSA is inhibiting this kind of growth and it is detrimental to everyone. As someone who has lived in Maine for most of my life and frequently struggled with consistent employment, I feel I would benefit from the impacts of LD 2007 as well.

Lastly, one of the things I love most about Maine is our beautiful environment. It is not lost on me that my family and I have for generations benefited from the stewardship of the Wabanaki tribes who have been taking care of the land and water for thousands of years. In this time of global environmental degradation it's clear that the most cared for, protected, and thriving environments are ones where the people indigenous to those lands have the right to steward their lands. I care deeply about the environment and spend lots of time outdoors, as I know many other residents and visitors do, too. This is one more way that everyone benefits from supporting the rights of Wabanaki Nations. Revising MICSA would allow Wabanaki Nations to have increased authority over natural resource regulation on tribal land and trust land acquisition. Protecting our natural resources is good for everyone, in the present and in the future.

I thank all members of the Judiciary Committee for reading my words. I am grateful to be able to testify in support of this legislation, and I hope you will join me in support of LD 2007.

Claire Horne
Appleton
LD 2007

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