

Thomas (Tim) Atwater
Wells
LD 2007

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on
Judiciary

From: Thomas (Tim) Atwater 94 Dorfield Lane, Wells, ME 04090

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 Tim Atwater, I live in Wells.

This is my written testimony in support of LD 2007.

LD 2007 represents a start, but only a start, towards overdue justice for the Wabanaki people, and for renewed hope for lands which they and their ancestors have lived on and faithfully cared for over the past 12,000 years.

Unfortunately the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) deprived the Wabanaki Nations of justice, by short-changing them out of lands and rights that were determined to be theirs by the federal government in the 1970's, and by treating them differently from the other 570 federally-recognized tribes. As a result the Wabanaki have been denied full access to tribal self-determination under federal policies for more than 40 years.

Now it is time to begin correcting Maine's unjust policies. This can begin by amending provisions in the MICSMA that limit tribal rights that should be theirs under the terms of federal laws. Enacting LD 2007 will bring the Wabanaki Nations under coverage by federal self-determination policies, programs and funding that other Native Americans have long had access to.

The Wabanaki peoples have been protecting the environment and maintaining sustainable ecological practices for thousands of years before European settlement of Maine. Restoration of basic rights will help ensure the Wabanaki Nations will be able to continue to exercise their traditional practices and maintain their living heritage.

LD 2007 represents a good start. It should be speedily enacted and implemented.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

Thomas (Tim) Atwater
Wells, ME