

Edward Walworth MD
Lewiston
LD 2007

Dear Senator Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee,
Please support LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations.

This reasonable bill implements the consensus recommendations of a bipartisan 13-member task force. It will establish that three federally recognized tribes, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, and the Houlton Band of Maliseets, enjoy the same “rights, privileges, powers, duties and immunities” as all 570 other federally recognized tribes in the United States.

When my college classmate, Tom Tureen, helped craft the 1980 lands settlement, it was felt far and wide that the native tribes of Maine had gained many benefits. That may have been true, but over time, tribes elsewhere across the country have earned many other rights and privileges. It is time to level the playing field nationwide.

The bill will allow the tribes to complete a cornerstone of the 1980 lands settlement, the purchase of lands from willing sellers. It will attract investment that will benefit rural Maine. Because the Wabanaki have been careful stewards of natural resources for thousands of years, it will benefit our environment and wildlife.

I hope that you will support basic fairness by voting in favor of LD 2007.

Sincerely,