

**Testimony in support of LD 2007, An Act of Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nation**

To: Sen. Carney, Rep, Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Jennifer Soda  
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Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee

My Name is Jennifer Soda and I live in Scarborough. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

Maine has always been a land of opportunity for many people with both rich farmland and abundant seas. Maine has also been a land of justice. Like, in 1857, when the US Supreme Court declared that African American individuals were not citizens of the United States. Maine's high court upheld the African American's right to vote. Or in 2012, Maine was one of the first states to allow same sex couple the right to marry.

But not all have shared in this justice and opportunity. The original people of Maine, the Wabanaki nation, has a long history of being denied both justice and opportunity. These very rich land and seas made them targets of extortion and unfair practices. While the Settlement Act made some attempt to provide justice by "entrusting" back some of this stolen land. This act is imperfect and denies the people the full right to the land.

LD 2007 will help with these imperfections. It will help generate both individual and community revenue; decreasing poverty and need for public assistance. As well as improving community infrastructure. This revenue will also trickle down to the community enlarge as establishments, like casinos, bring tourists to the region. LD 2007 will help create jobs not only for the Wabanaki people but for the nearby community. Something, which is becoming even more important as climate change effects both Maine's agriculture and fishing industry. Last, it will empower the people to enforce laws and oversee resolution of issues, developing a sense of community and pride.

Maine remains a land of opportunity and justice, including to our newest residents, asylum seekers. But it is time we provide both to our first residences.

Thank you committee members for you time and service to the State of Maine

Jennifer Soda