

Erin Donahue  
Montville  
LD 2007

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on  
Judiciary  
From: Erin Donahue, 904 Woodmans Mill Rd, Montville, 04942  
Owner, Tiny Acres Farm LLC  
Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki  
Nations

Intro: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Erin and I live in Montville. I am a small business owner, and farmer. I am here to testify in support of LD 2007.

Testimony: I moved to Maine as a teenager, attending high school in Central Maine then going on to attend university in Orono. It was not until attending university that I learned of the Wabanaki people. Let that sink in. Statewide curriculums are lacking Native dialogue and experiences. I lived in this state for years, some of them formative education years, before I learned Maine's full history and more importantly, Wabanaki history. Wabanaki people who were here long before the Europeans who founded our country and our state of Maine. When I first read the 1980 Maine Indian Claims and Settlement Act, my thought was "how is this fair to Maine's tribes? How has this not been updated?". That was 10 years ago, it's time for a change! For decades, MICSAs have posed many obstacles for the sovereignty of Maine's tribes and because of this there has been limited access to federal programs and funding. Federal programs and funding that has elsewhere in the U.S. greatly boosted Native businesses and the local economy. The economic restrictions Maine's tribes face to this day directly affect Wabanaki youth and will continue to affect them for years to come if something doesn't change. According to the 2019 U.S. Census: Maine's childhood poverty rate is 15% whereas Maine Tribal childhood poverty rates range between 40 and 77%. Passing LD2007 could open opportunities to federal programs for Maine tribes. A recent Harvard Report found that by restoring Maine Tribal Sovereignty, Maine would likely see an additional \$330 million a year GDP, gain 2,700+ jobs, and generate \$39 million a year in state and local tax revenue. Many of the 2,700+ jobs created would help support rural areas of Maine where employment opportunities can be very limited.

Closing: We need to return the right of self-governance to the Wabanaki people so they have a clear path for helping their communities, clear of obstacles created by outdated and unfair legislation. LD 2007 will not only benefit Maine's tribes, it will benefit the surrounding rural communities as well.

Commit to Maine state responsibility and furthering partnerships with the Wabanaki Tribes of Maine by passing LD2007. Thank you for reading my testimony today.