

Toni Facciponti
portland
LD 2007

Testimony in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations

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

From: Toni Facciponti of Portland Maine

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Toni Facciponti, I moved to Maine when I finished high school and have grown to love it here, living in Farmington, Boothbay Harbor, Skowhegan and now Portland. I love the pace of life and the seemingly communal love for the land and respect for the natural beauty surrounding Maine. I am writing today to testify in support of LD 2007.

For years I enjoyed the hiking trails and parks of this state not knowing that the indigenous tribes of Maine that cultivated the land and stewarded the renowned natural beauty for thousands of years have been uniquely denied their rights and blocked from self sovereignty. I only just learned that while the 570 other federally recognized tribes in Indian Country have their right to self governance, the four tribes of the Wabanaki Nations have been subject to a cruel exception from Maine specific legislature.

Calling Maine a “vacation land” and a state that values nature and the environment feels like a betrayal when the Wabanaki Nations have been left behind other tribes, facing the dispossession of their land, scant economic opportunities, and enduring the overreach of Maine state government into their lives and communities. Wabanaki Nations and their surrounding neighbors, rural Mainers, all have suffered as a result of MICSAs restrictions.

LD 2007 would begin to right the wrongdoings of the past. Moving this bill forward would be a step towards justice and fairness due to all tribal nations. Removing the obstacles facing Wabanaki Nations will create jobs for the region, income growth for both tribes and rural Mainers, and it would begin to combat the staggering childhood poverty rates specific to Wabanaki communities. Easing restrictions with LD 2007 will benefit the health, education, safety, and wellbeing of Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this vital issue. I urge you to support this bill, supporting LD 2007 is the best avenue to a better future for Maine. Partnership, mutual respect, and growth will follow accountability and amending broken systems of the past.

Sincerely,
Toni Facciponti