

Susan Caldwell
West
LD 2007

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary in Maine. My name is Susan Caldwell and I live at 150 Indiana Road in West Gardiner, Maine 04345. I am writing to provide written testimony in support of LD 2007: An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations.

I believe that strengthening the voice of the Wabanaki people and their decision-making authority and increasing Wabanaki stewardship of lands and waters throughout Maine will be a benefit to all people. Reducing the restrictions imposed by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act so that Wabanaki people are able to access the same benefits and opportunities as the other federally-recognized tribes across the United States is a significant matter of justice and equity. It will also lead to greater economic prosperity in our state.

LD 2007 takes important steps towards recognizing fundamental rights for Indigenous Peoples, increasing Wabanaki self-governance and minimizing economic disparity. Wabanaki people have demonstrated good stewardship of natural resources and productive collaboration with others in Maine leading to healthier natural systems that support healthier human communities. Incorporating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into conservation work and natural resource management leads to wise decision-making and principles of sustainability to benefit all people who now live in Maine.

Thank you to the Committee Members of the Judiciary for support of LD 2007, which will support the Wabanaki people, the people of the Dawnland, who have been welcoming the sun in the land now known as Maine for over 12,000 years. Restoration of Wabanaki self-determination will benefit all of us.