

Linda Wood
Woolwich
LD 2007

Re Hearing February 26, 2024 on LD 2007

Legislators,

I write in support of LD 2007 which restores to the Maine tribal communities the right of self-determination and long restricted tribal sovereignty. For decades the federal programs, policies, and funding have not been available to our Wabanaki alliance. Since the Settlement Act economic growth here has been much slower at a mere 9% compared to the national growth rate of 61% for all federally recognized tribes. In Maine the rate of tribal childhood poverty is twice the state average.

LD 2007 would restore full tribal sovereignty for Wabanaki people and access to federal benefits. It would foster job creation and economic development, increase tribal health care, and render our tribes qualified for federal disaster relief funds as may be required.

The changes will reduce the State's authority over Indian affairs so that federal Indian law would govern as it does for other federally recognized tribes. The tribal courts would have similar jurisdiction although gaming activities would still be controlled by Maine State law.

These changes will enhance tribal government and improve living conditions among the tribes.

Recognition of the Wabanaki right to self-government is long overdue as a correction to generations of mistreatment and disrespect.