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LD 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on LD 2007, The Maine Implementing Act, as suggested in submitted amendment. In addition to the legal and political aspects of this legislation, it is also important to consider the social and economic effects of allowing the Wabanaki Tribes of Maine to achieve full status and participation in federal programs designed to aid, assist, and compensate Native American sovereign entities. My offer my perspective as one who has lived and worked on or near multiple Indian Reservations in different parts of the country.

Particularly in rural areas such as Maine, communities are intertwined in the need for goods and services. The Indian communities in our state are no exception. As such, the resources and benefits that arise from programming and development by the Tribes will overflow into the neighboring communities. In one instance concerning a Job Corps where I worked, local economists estimated that every dollar from that facility circulated through the local valley economy eleven times before it existed the area. Following that prediction, \$1 million spent would carry \$11 million of local impact which would reach far beyond the confines of the Indian community where it originated. Many Mainers, non-Indians included, would benefit from the economic opportunities, possibly in employment but certainly in commerce.

Such a beneficial partnership is possible when Native Sovereignty is viewed without suspicion and local communities recognize their Indian members and neighbors. These relationships lead to healthy, positive communities, and healthy communities prosper.

In short, allowing Native tribes and nations in Maine to participate in federal programming intended for Native Americans on an equal footing, as do all their counterparts across the country, is beneficial for all Mainers. It will help create prosperity and allow us all to build a prosperous future and a place where young people can envision a bright future.

I commend the efforts of those legislators responsible for LD 2007 and look forward to seeing its enactment.

Respectfully submitted,  
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