

Carrick Gambell
Scarborough
LD 2007

Legislators,

Thank you for taking the time to consider this act. I am a life-long Mainer, and currently work to help farmers implement conservation practices on their land. I live in Scarborough, and enjoy fishing, gardening, skiing, biking, swimming, and hiking, all on land traditionally stewarded by the Wabanaki people. Whether we choose to accept it or ignore it, our ability to raise families, grow food, and recreate in our beloved state is a direct result of the forced removal of Wabanaki peoples from this land. Settlers in Maine chose to damn their fisheries, burn their, break or ignore treaties, and repeatedly advance settlements without tribal acceptance. While I am not a member of Maine's tribal communities, and while my own parents did not move to Maine until the 1970s, I believe that the Wabanaki confederacy is owed so much more than we, as the settler community, can ever hope to repay. Our debt is beyond the reach of financial remuneration. The Land Claims Settlement clearly did not resolve the misdeeds of the State of Maine, and has not provided a meaningful pathway for Wabanaki tribes to advance and prosper. The voices and pleas of the Wabanaki citizens should suffice as evidence to this point. However, recent research has shown the mediocre economic growth in Wabanaki communities in the 40 years since the Land Claims Settlement, in comparison to remarkable growth on average throughout "Indian Country." LD 2007 will not automatically solve the challenges to growth and prosperity for the Wabanaki confederacy, but it is a vital step in the right direction. Self-determination will put the tribes on equal footing with the 570 other federally recognized tribes. The Land Claims Settlement provisions are no longer serving the State of Maine, and her prosperity as a whole, and certainly not serving the Wabanaki confederacy. Let's ensure a brighter future for the Wabanaki people, and enshrine self-determination into law.