To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
From: Becca Ferguson, Portland, 04101
Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

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Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Becca Ferguson and I live in Portland. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 2007.

I am writing in solidarity with Maine's Wabanaki Tribal Nations who have been wrongfully denied full access to federal policies of self-determination. Passing LD 2007 is the first step to addressing this injustice and beginning a long but necessary process to improve the relationship between the Wabanaki Tribal Nations and our state.

My background is in Environmental and Climate studies and I am proud to live in a state that has passed several policies in favor of progressive climate action. However, while Maine may be ahead of other states in addressing climate change, we are lagging in our actions to recognize tribal sovereignty. From an environmental standpoint, Maine is currently preventing Wabanaki Nations from exercising their sovereign right to regulate their lands and waters— something they have sustainably done for millenia. This is not only an environmental injustice but environmental racism.

Beyond an environmental standpoint, interfering with Wabanaki Tribal Nations' sovereignty has direct, tangible consequences. Across the country over the past 40 years, 570 federal tribes have received access to programs and funding that led to the creation of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in goods and services produced by Native businesses. Maine has prevented Wabanaki peoples from accessing these services and in doing so, hindered Wabanaki resurgence.

It is crucial that you support LD 2007 to ensure that in the future, we do a better job of respecting the sovereignty of Wabanaki Tribal Nations here in Maine and work to address the centuries of colonial injustice.

Thank you for your consideration

Becca Ferguson