

**Testimony in support of LD 2007, *An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations***

**To:** Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

**From:** Holly Zadra, 287 Somerset Ave., Pittsfield

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Holly Zadra and I live in Pittsfield. I am a writer, a teacher, a mom, and an advocate for clean water here and across the United States. I am likewise an advocate for tribal sovereignty here and across the United States for many reasons. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

One reason, among many, that I support this legislation is healthy water – drinking water, yes; healthy water for the flora and fauna the water supports; and water for waterways themselves – these living veins and arteries of our landscape’s circulatory system. Tribes, by and large, understand the long-term consequences of any action on water and the ecosystem. They understand the relationship with and the impact humans have where they live and work. Even a 7th generation family of “Mainers” of European descent pale in comparison to the more than 600 generations the Wabanaki have been in relationship with this land. They’ve been learning from this very particular place on the globe since the Laurentide Ice Sheet melted. If there were no other reasons to support this legislation, this would be enough.

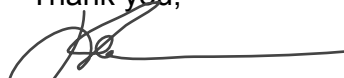
Yet there’s much more. I will remark about only three of a multitude of reasons to support this legislation:

1. This legislation is bipartisan. People from all walks of life, all political backgrounds, support efforts to amend The Settlement Act because its impact are unjust.
2. 570 other tribes across the United States enjoy economic benefits solely denied to the Wabanaki. This denial of economic benefits points to an accompanying cascade of socio-cultural challenges felt directly within tribal communities and indirectly within neighboring communities. It’s time to address this disparity and begin repair work.
3. Harvard researchers note how self-government is a boon to Indian country, and likewise a boon to neighboring rural communities. I live in a rural community and know the challenges faced by all of us. The data says tribal self-government would significantly boost state GDP, increase local and state tax revenue, and create jobs for both tribal members and their neighbors. I believe the data.

As many of us know and understand, The Settlement Act is broken. The intentional or unintentional consequences of this legislation have been overwhelmingly negative for Wabanaki tribes. Like all legislation, The Settlement Act should be considered a living document: it is in need of amending.

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary Committee members, please support LD 2007.

Thank you,



Holly Zadra