

**To: The Honorable Senator Anne Carney,
The Honorable Representative Matt Moonen, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary**

DATE: February 26, 2024

RE: LD 2007 - An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

Good morning, Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee,. My name is Andrea Stark, and I live in Monroe, in Waldo County, Maine. I am writing in support of LD 2007.

It is beyond my expertise and not my purpose to revisit the motives behind the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act or the Maine Implementing Act. Whatever naïve, honorable or ill intentions and expectations there were on any side in 1980, those acts did not recognize the Wabanaki Nations' inherent right to self-government.

*“When the governmental authority of tribes was first challenged in the 1830's, U. S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall articulated the fundamental principle that has guided the evolution of federal Indian law to the present: *That tribes possess a nationhood status and retain inherent powers of self-government.*”*

--U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs

While the Mills administration has taken steps to return some jurisdictional authority to the Tribes, these fall far short of full sovereignty. The Tribes have been patient, they have been respectful, they have been acting and negotiating in good faith. The Governor insists that Tribal Sovereignty will lead to conflict and litigation, but –should that arise--we have the experience and wisdom of more than 570 federally recognized Tribes and their state governments to help guide us.

We in the United States of America and here in Maine are learning to recognize and acknowledge the racism and paternalism of our shared history. Today, I urge you to recognize and acknowledge the wisdom and desire for self-determination of our Wabanaki neighbors by voting “Ought to Pass” in support of LD 2007.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Andrea Stark