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February 25, 2024

To: Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

Kennebunkport Conservation Trust (KCT) strongly supports LD 2007, which moves the State of Maine to recognize the inherent sovereignty of Wabanaki Tribes.

As a conservation organization dedicated to preserving land for use by current and future generations, managing properties to honor the natural and cultural heritage of our community, we fundamentally support the inherent sovereignty of Wabanaki Tribes and their right to manage native land and waters they have taken care of for millennia.

KCT works to protect Maine's unique natural environment and enable local people to access and engage with the land in order to ensure future generations can continue to thrive here. We believe that removing barriers for Wabanaki communities to purchase land and regulate hunting, fishing, natural resources and land use is critical to ensuring that future generations of ALL communities can thrive in Maine.

Furthermore, LD 2007 is an opportunity to correct injustices resulting from the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act which has left Wabanaki Tribes with diminished status compared to all other federally recognized Tribes in the US. We believe justice and opportunity for this land's first people, the Wabanaki, to be essential for building a stronger, better, more equitable Maine that we can all be proud of.

This bill benefits Maine's environment, economic development and the well-being of both Native and non-Native communities; we urge you to pass it without delay.

Sincerely,

Tom Bradbury

Executive Director
Kennebunkport Conservation Trust

Russ Grady

President
Board of Directors, KCT