



183 French Street
Bangor, Maine 04401
(207) 945-4578
info@bethelbangor.org
<http://www.bethelbangor.org/>

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February 25, 2024

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Committee on Judiciary, Attn: Susan Pinette
c/o Legislative Information Office
State House, Room 438
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

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

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

I am submitting this testimony as the Social Action Chair of Congregation Beth El, a Reform Jewish Synagogue in Bangor, in support of LD 2007: An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations. Members of the Social Action Committee fully supports Wabanaki sovereignty, and we support this bill that makes necessary and long-overdue changes to the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act.

Wabanaki Nations in Maine currently do not enjoy the same rights, powers, privileges, and immunities as other federally recognized tribes in the United States. This situation of injustice has resulted in decades of social and economic barriers for the Wabanaki people and surrounding communities. LD 2007 will grant Wabanaki Nations the right to self-governance.

Recognizing and repairing past wrongs is central to Judaism, as is fairness and equity for all. It is time to restore sovereignty to Wabanaki nations so that they can benefit from the rights and privileges enjoyed by all other tribes in the U.S. For these reasons, we urge you to vote in favor of LD 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Geraldine Gross
Social Action Chair
Congregation Beth El
Bangor, Maine