

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

We, the undersigned citizens of York County, strongly support LD 2007, “An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations”

The proposed legislation is the result of many years of painstaking bipartisan work, has been subject to thorough due diligence and only benefits the people of Maine and Wabanaki territory. We support the efforts of Indigenous peoples here to have their inherent rights of sovereignty respected and protected within Maine state law, rather than obstructed. This Act is a critical and overdue step towards repairing over 40 years of damage resulting from the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act and will allow for the building of constructive, good-will relationships going forward between the State of Maine and Wabanaki nations.

We believe that the restoration of Wabanaki rights to self-regulation, including land use, is not only the right thing to do, but will benefit ALL those who live here now and in future generations. In particular, millennia of Wabanaki experience tending to the relationship between land and people not only brings a healthy diversity of perspective, knowledge and wisdom to our state, but also has the potential for leadership to address the many environmental crises we now face - including resource management and climate change.

There are past and present initiatives in Maine that put our state in a position to be a great national example for restorative justice, healthy community development and climate adaptability. However, our state is also responsible for many instances of devastating harm enacted on Wabanaki people. Holding onto legislation that blocks Indigenous nations in Maine from accessing federal support and protection, using allocated funds to purchase land or taking responsibility for their own land and water use – perpetuates that harm and prevents us moving forward in any meaningful way. It certainly stops us fulfilling our potential for leadership.

In summary, LD 2007 is the definition of the proverbial "no-brainer" - it is necessary, straightforward, uncostly, beneficial and absolutely the right thing to do. On the other hand, the costs of NOT enacting it are sufficient to be unconscionable.

We look to the members of this Judiciary Committee to do what is right and recommend this bill for passage by the legislature.

Sincerely,

Juliet Altham, Kennebunkport
Gail Roller, Kennebunkport
Rebecca Roberts, Biddeford
Estelle Cohen, Kennebunk
Richard Altham, Kennebunkport
David Jourdan, Kennebunkport
Sarah Kasprzak, Kennebunk
Denise Deschenes, Kennebunkport

Jordan Kelley, Ogunquit
Lynn Jourdan, Kennebunkport
Joan Hull, Arundel
Judith Pitchfork, Arundel
Frank MacDougald, Kennebunkport
Elizabeth Johnson, Kennebunkport
Susan Lee Warner, Kennebunkport