

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

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

From: Piper J. Stiles

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Piper Stiles and I live in Belfast, Maine. I am a mother working my way through graduate school at the University of Maine at Augusta, and I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

It is heartening that this bill is on the table, while also hard to believe that it is just now on the table, in 2024. The recognition of indigenous tribal rights to sovereignty and self governance is long overdue. Maine being behind the curve in acting along these lines is an unfortunate mark on the integrity of this state-- this state which prides itself on the beautiful and plentiful natural spaces and resources which the Wabanaki people have stewarded for many thousands of years, long before anyone uttered the term "Vacationland"; this state which maintains the motto "*Dirigo*". Nothing can erase or undo the horrific injustices perpetrated on native people throughout the duration of this nation's development, but we have the opportunity today to make a better choice. Passing LD 2007 is a small step in the right direction. Allowing this bill to fail would be yet another senseless, harmful act against the Wabanaki people. LD 2007 merely brings the rights of the Wabanaki Nations in line with the other 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States.

Thank you for the time, attention, and heart you have turned toward this important piece of legislation. Please vote in favor of this Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations.

Sincerely,

Piper J. Stiles