

We, Robert and Mary Lou Bagley, count ourselves among the thousands who support the restoration of full sovereignty rights to the Wabanaki Nations. Thus, we strongly support LD 2007.

Ever since we learned about the Settlement Acts of 1980, we've been appalled at the state of Maine's interpretation of those Acts and continued refusal to honor them as "living documents" subject to change and realignment according to the principles of fairness and equity. Barriers erected as a result of a rigid interpretation of The Acts and a continued failure to consider the circumstances and pressures placed upon the Wabanaki People at the time of their enactment, are inexcusable in 2024. It is high time we restore full sovereignty by legally affirming their inherent right to self-determination.

It is indisputable that because of the Settlement Acts the Wabanaki have long been denied the economic growth and access to Federal policies that 570 other Federally recognized tribes across Indian Country have achieved. That's five hundred and seventy tribes! And it is high time restrictions placed on the Wabanaki by the Settlement Acts were eased, enabling them to take full advantage of policies and programs to which they should be entitled.

We believe in entrusting the Wabanaki Peoples with the care of lands and waters that are their birthright and allowing them to address the pollution of such. The environment and all neighboring communities would only benefit from their stewardship.

The Christian Doctrine of Discovery was decreed in 1493 to justify the seizure of lands not inhabited by Christians. Thus began the practice of claiming territories on which Indigenous Peoples were living—of stealing the land and committing acts of genocide against those who had lived in relationship with that land for millennia. Isn't it time we stopped denying their inherent human rights?