



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

**From: The Board of Directors of Healthy Acadia  
February 26, 2024**

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

We, the Board of Directors of Healthy Acadia, are writing in strong support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations.

Healthy Acadia is a community and public health coalition devoted to addressing the critical health challenges our communities face and making it possible for all people to lead healthier lives. We have been working since 2001 with hundreds of partners and thousands of community members to collaboratively address a wide range of locally-defined health needs. We serve Washington and Hancock counties, and we provide additional community health support and partnership across Maine.

We at Healthy Acadia stand in firm support of the Wabanaki Confederacy and all of the Tribes in Maine as we wholeheartedly support LD 2007. As you know, this bill would simply put tribes in Maine on equal footing to the other federally recognized tribes (570 tribes across the U.S.). It would restore the rights of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, and the Mi'kmaq Nation to self-govern within their territories, in accordance with the federal laws that govern tribal lands elsewhere in the U.S.

Healthy Acadia is deeply committed to racial equity and justice, including justice for our Wabanaki neighbors and family, who are the original stewards of this land we call Maine, and who have suffered generations of injustices, violence, and cruelty. We open meetings with Land Acknowledgements, as part of our work to understand our true history, to see our present with clear eyes, and to envision our future with greater justice and equity. We support the efforts of all Tribes to protect and restore the land and water, and to advance cultural healing and recovery. We remember those whose lives and land were taken or torn apart through colonial settlement of the land as well as ongoing injustices, and we honor the Wabanaki People as the first protectors of this land, as well as key leaders in ongoing and future stewardship.



We know, however, that simply offering Land Acknowledgements is not enough. Not nearly enough. We are guided by our Wabanaki team members, partners, and friends to develop programming and offerings that are most beneficial to Wabanaki community goals, visions, and priorities. We are honored to partner with Tribal communities on a growing number of public health initiatives, and we continually learn from them as we work to address the health challenges community members face and to help all people thrive. We commit to our ongoing work of justice and equity, to our learning journey as allies and partners and team members, and to doing all we can to listen, support, and follow the leadership of the Tribal communities.

This right now is a moment when we all must listen, support, and follow the Wabanaki people. They have worked tirelessly, collaboratively, and in good faith to right wrongs and move forward in a positive direction for their communities, for their land, and for all of us. We have the opportunity now, with the passage of LD 2007, to take the next step to restore justice and fairness, to take the next step to repair harm. And we have a responsibility to do so.

We give gratitude to elders both past and present, we give gratitude to the many, many generations past of Wabanaki people who stewarded and protected this land, and we give gratitude to the Wabanaki people of today who are ready and willing to work together to build a better future for all. We wholeheartedly urge you to pass LD 2007, for the sake of generations past, present, and future, and in the name of justice and equality.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Board of Directors of Healthy Acadia