

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

To: Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Anne D. (Andy) Burt, 27 Bunchberry Lane, Edgecomb, ME 04556

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

My name is Andy Burt and I live in Edgecomb. I am a retired environmental and social justice program director, and the founder and director of Down to Earth Storytelling, a Maine film production nonprofit organization. **I am writing to testify in strong support of LD 2007.**

As a former journalist who focused on writing human interest stories, when I read the Harvard Report (*Economic and Social Impacts of Restrictions on the Applicability of Federal Indian Policies to the Wabanaki Nations in Maine released 2022*), I immediately wanted to meet the people and gather the human stories behind the dramatic statistics and compelling information the document revealed (**i.e. personal income growth of 61% for citizens in 570 federally recognized gaming and non-gaming tribes across the U.S. while Wabanaki citizens saw just 9% growth due in large part to restrictions imposed by the 1980 Settlement Acts; While most other tribes have enjoyed a 30-year economic boom, Maine leaves on the table annually about \$369 million in Gross Domestic Product and tax revenues, and more than 2700 jobs, half of which would likely be filled by neighbors of Wabanaki Nations—that all could be remedied with passage of LD 2007 and restoration/expansion of self-governance capabilities to Wabanaki Nations**)

So I have launched a film project to document the lived experiences represented by the report's statistics. While we are still getting background information and identifying tribes, tribal leaders and non-Native community leaders who are working in partnership with tribes that have experienced substantial economic growth since 1989, some common truths have emerged from our preliminary work that I believe are pertinent to your consideration of LD 2007.

— The seeds for economic prosperity and social well-being in tribal communities and effective tribal-state relations across Indian Country are **respect for inherent tribal sovereignty and expanded tribal self-governance capabilities**, which passage of LD 2007 would restore to Wabanaki Nations in Maine.

— While a majority of Indian tribes have government-regulated gaming operations to produce income that supports tribal government services, health and educational programs, **tribes today are creating economic development initiatives and corporations to diversify their income streams to assure economic stability.**

— Recognizing the benefits, many **states and municipalities are proactively reaching out to tribal governments within their states to partner** on economic development initiatives as well as natural resources management, environmental and public health programs, etc.

The research says it all. In Indian Country — in Red States and Blue States —when inherent tribal sovereignty is respected and tribal self-governance capabilities are expanded then economic prosperity and social well-being follow for all.—Native and non-Native people alike. It is time for Maine to jettison the fears of unintended consequences and embrace the many positive benefits other states and tribes already enjoy. It could be a new day in the Dawnland.

Please vote unanimously OUGHT TO PASS on LD 2007.

Respectfully submitted in gratitude for your service to the people in Maine

A few inspiring stories from Indian Country that illustrate my points: ...

Coeur d’Alene Tribe in Plummer, Idaho (population est 1044 - latest census) Rural northern Idaho near Washington State border. City is in the center of reservation territory)

In 1990 the City of Plummer and the Coeur d’Alene Tribe jointly created a health center to provide medical services and healthcare for everyone (Native and non-Native) who needed it in their rural region. The City and Tribe collectively secured federal and state money to fund the center. The Center is federally qualified so that the 30% of the Center’s patients who qualify receive services on a sliding scale. The Marimn Health Center was the first healthcare for all facility in US created by a partnership of a tribe and city/municipality. The health center has since expanded and the community has built a 43,000 sq. ft. \$5M Wellness Center that was fully paid for with State, Federal and private donations and is designed to attract all ages for healthy exercise and recreation.

Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi Indians, Michigan

Waseyabek Development Co. LLC, owned by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi Indians, was created to diversity the Band’s income from gaming to non-gaming income. Waseyabek buys and develops companies and creates partnerships between tribal businesses and federal/state agencies.

Michigan Economic Development Corp. has a Project Mgr for Tribal Business Development. In 2019 Waseyabek completed the *Michigan Non-Gaming Tribal Economic Impact Study* that found during 2019, 38 businesses owned by 9 Michigan tribes and operating an average of 9.6 years had treated 1847 jobs with average salary of \$45.6K, and generated \$288,756,091 income and \$24,213,536 in federal and state taxes had a positive impact on the state and the state regions where the tribes were located. .The Industry Sectors represented in the study (areas that correspond to tribal values of long-term sustainability) include utilities, construction, manufacturing, retail trade, finance and insurance, real estate and leasing, professional/scientific/technical services, management of companies and enterprises, administrative support, arts/entertainment/recreation, and accommodation/food service.

Oregon has established Tribal Enterprise Zones (maximum size is 12 sq mi or less and one per tribe; and Reservation Enterprise Zones (12 sq mi for 10-11 years) partnership of tribe with port, city, or county.

Anne D Burt
Edgecomb
LD 2007

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