

Jeanne Roy
Mount Chase
LD 2007

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jeanne Roy and I live in Mount Chase. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

It is past time for Maine to recognize the inherent sovereignty of Wabanaki Nations. As someone who has lived in close proximity to several other tribal communities in western states, I find it shameful that my home state of Maine does not treat federally recognized Wabanaki Nations the same as the other 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States. More than 200 years after Maine became a state, it is now time to fully embody the state motto of Dirigo and lead the way into a new future of working in close collaboration with the original indigenous inhabitants of the place we now call Maine.

LD 2007 will also enhance our ability to work in collaboration to sustain the lands and waters of Maine for future generations. I grew up along the Kennebec River near Augusta and have seen the transformation in the watershed since the removal of Edwards Dam. I now live near a free-flowing stretch of the Penobscot River in northern Maine and have the opportunity to work with Wabanaki colleagues in caring for public lands. As the original caretakers of this place for thousands of years prior to European-American settlement, they shared their knowledge of the land and waters with newcomers. Through consultation with Wabanaki Nations, the state of Maine has the opportunity to improve its natural resources. Last year, an article in the Bangor Daily News stated that 1489 Atlantic salmon had returned to the Penobscot River as of late July 2023, which was the highest number of returning salmon in 10 years. Having lived in Bristol Bay, Alaska and seen the millions of salmon that return each summer to support traditional subsistence lifestyles as well as how they support a \$2 billion economy, such a low number of returning salmon indicates the devastating impact of ignoring the place-based knowledge of the Penobscot River held by the people who share its name.

This is just one example of how Maine's failure to recognize the inherent sovereignty of Wabanaki Nations impacts Maine's resources, economy and residents.

Recognizing the inherent sovereignty of Wabanaki Nations through LD 2007 will enable them to benefit from the same status as all other federally recognized tribes as well as enhance the lands and waters for all who hunt, fish and recreate in Maine.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Roy
Mount Chase, Maine