

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
From: Jon Kachmar, 38 Diamond St, Portland, 04101, Portland Trails

Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jon Kachmar, and I live in Portland. I am testifying on behalf of Portland Trails. I am here to testify in support of LD 2007.

Portland Trails maintains 80 miles of trails in Portland, Westbrook, and Falmouth. Our goal is to provide walkable, bikeable, and sustainable transportation to connect people with work travel routes, recreational opportunities, neighborhood school access, and other daily interactions within the city and surrounding communities. We are deeply committed to ensuring equitable access for all, including native Wabanaki peoples, new Mainer communities, public housing residents, LGBTQ+, and other underserved populations.

Portland Trails has committed to supporting Wabanaki through on-the-ground work on one of our best known properties called the Fore River Sanctuary located in Portland. We are honored to learn and listen to Dwayne Tomah who is a Passamaquoddy Language Keeper. Our work with Dwayne is allowing Portland Trails to gain a new perspective on the importance of this coastal salt marsh property, particularly understanding the relationships to the land that Wabanaki people have nurtured over thousands of years. This partnership has allowed Portland Trails to continue our ongoing journey of respect and learning for Wabanaki ways.

We are also committed to gaining a better understanding of Wabanaki history, culture, and connections to the land and nature. Some of our board members and staff have engaged with the First Light trainings to listen, learn, and enrich our understanding.

Finally, Portland Trails has committed to make an ongoing financial contribution to the Wabanaki Alliance beginning in 2023. All of our efforts have been aimed at supporting Wabanaki self-determination, and we do so with the utmost respect, reverence, and appreciation for Wabanaki people both past and present.

LD 2007 offers an opportunity to finally offer the original inhabitants of Maine basic equity and fairness. It is important to recognize that Wabanaki people are very much still here in Maine and present now. I urge you to remove the significant barriers that Maine native people currently face and allow them to be on equal footing with other federal tribes across the country. I join more than 1,600 Mainers and 250 organizations in united support of Wabanaki self-determination and sovereignty.

I thank this committee for listening to my testimony and urge you to pass LD 2007.