

February 26, 2024

**To:** Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

**From:** Bonnie Tai, PO Box 362, Hulls Cove, ME 04644



**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 Bonnie Tai, and I live in Bar Harbor. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

As a naturalized citizen of the United States born in Taiwan, I understand viscerally what it is like not to have any multi-generational connection to the place where I live and to come from a place whose sovereignty and right to self-determination is questioned and not recognized by most of the world. Every day I live here I am reminded that most of us living in Maine have no idea what it means to live and steward a place for more than a few generations, not to mention *hundreds* of generations, as our Wabanaki neighbors have. Passing LD 2007 would allow Wabanaki tribes the ability to access federal resources and policies to better protect ancestral lands and facilitate economic development for the material benefit of tribal members and their neighbors.

Since moving to Maine nearly a quarter century ago, I have had the pleasure and privilege of getting to know and learning from many Wabanaki citizens, educators, artists, scholars, and environmental stewards. Their breadth of knowledge, inspired creativity, unparalleled generosity, and intergenerational wisdom enable them to not only make choices every day that improve the quality of life for their own families but also others in their communities in Maine and even beyond our state borders through their creative and scholarly works. Passing LD 2007 would enable them to do even more than they already do on behalf of Wabanaki and Maine citizens, including lifting children and the families who raise them out of poverty and protecting our well-loved lands and waters for future generations to enjoy.

As a childhood survivor and long-time volunteer to support those impacted by domestic violence, I would also like to see tribal communities be able to access federal funds and programs in support of survivors to ensure more reliable and sustainable resources to end domestic violence in our communities.

Please pass LD 2007 to advance the sovereignty and self-determination of Wabanaki tribes for more just, sustainable, peaceful, creative, and collaborative communities in Maine.

Thank you for your service to our beautiful state and open-hearted attention to my testimony.