

Marla Stelk
Gorham
LD 2007

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

My name is Marla J. Stelk and I live in Gorham, Maine. I am also the Executive Director of the National Association of Wetland Managers (NAWM) which is headquartered in Portland, ME. I am writing on behalf of myself to testify in support of LD 2007.

In my job, I work closely with Tribal Nations and communities across the United States. Tribes everywhere are finally slowly gaining back their sovereignty and are working with states and federal agencies to restore traditional hunting and fishing rights, rights to steward natural resources that they have stewarded successfully for hundreds of year pre-colonialization, and rights to restore their cultural and spiritual practices and traditions. Maine stands alone - and not in a good way - at blocking the Wabanaki's path to self-determination.

My organization works side by side with states and Tribes, assisting them in their efforts to develop strong and effective wetland protection and restoration programs, as well as other Clean Water Act programs such as 106 and 319. All of the Tribes that I have worked with have a deep sense of belonging to and responsibility for the health of the natural world around us. But they need greater capacity to build and maintain environmental protection programs. States have multiple economic means to sustain such programs - Tribes do not.

It's time to remove the barriers that have kept the Wabanaki, along with their neighbors in rural Maine, from achieving the dramatic and sustained economic growth achieved over the past 40 years by 570 federal tribes across Indian Country.

I am fully in support of self-determination for the Wabanaki Nations and hope you will support them in this effort as well. Thank you for considering my feedback on this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Marla J. Stelk