



BASKAHEGAN COMPANY

Testimony in support of LD 2007

An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

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

From: John Manganello, President & CEO of Baskahegan Company

My name is John Manganello and I live in Freeport, Maine. I submit this personal testimony as well as on behalf of Baskahegan Company in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations.

Baskahegan Company manages roughly 150,000 acres of timberlands in northern Washington County, southern Aroostook County, and east of Baxter State Park in Penobscot County. For millennia, before the spread of white colonialism and the founding of Baskahegan Company, Wabanaki peoples lived in close relationship with and cared for the lands we currently own. An archaeological site neighboring our lands dates back 12,000 years, making Baskahegan's century of family ownership and management but the blink of an eye. We hope our principles of ownership reflect some of the multi-generational ethic of the Wabanaki, the original stewards of these lands, for the wellbeing of future generations and our planet.

Acknowledging the horrific history of forcible removal from indigenous homelands, disease, warfare and physical & cultural genocide, we recognize we are beneficiaries of past and ongoing injustices. We honor Wabanaki peoples who have called, what we know as Maine, home for thousands of years. We celebrate their presence, support their courage to seek justice and sovereignty, and are grateful for their dedicated cultural practices despite continuing racism, oppression and harm.

The Wabanaki should enjoy the rights, privileges, powers, duties and immunities similar to the other 570 federally recognized native tribes within the United States. LD 2007 is about *restoring* inherent rights and sovereignty; it is not about giving anew. We have moments in our lives when we have the opportunity to be on the right side of history, despite what unintended consequences or complications may come. No one has the ability to predict with certainty what those may be, but we do have the ability to trust one another and do what is right. This is one of those moments. The 1980 MICSAs were intended to be a living document and it provides for the State of Maine, Passamaquoddy Tribe and Penobscot Nation to amend the law within broad areas. It is time to modernize this broken deal and begin a new era of partnership with the Wabanaki Nations for the betterment of everyone in Maine.

Thank you,

John Manganello