

To: Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

From: April Fournier, 1241 Washington Ave, Portland ME 04103

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

Ya'at'eeh members of the Judiciary Committee, Ya'at'eeh shi k'ei doo shi' dine'e', Shí éí April yinishyé, Honágháahnii nishł́, Fournier báshíshchíín, Ákót'éego diné asdzáán nishł́, T'ahdii kóó honiidłó, Ahéhee'

Good morning members of the Judiciary Committee and welcome my friends and relatives. My name is April Fournier, I am from my mother's clan Honágháahnii, I am from my fathers clan Fournier, In this way I am a Dine' woman, We are still here. Thank you and I am grateful to have this opportunity to speak with you today in support of LD 2007.

It feels a little like Groundhog Day where we are living the same experience over and over again. We are together again, advocating for legislation that would restore the Wabanaki Nations their right to sovereignty. Though some progress has been made to recognize and restore rights and benefits to the tribes, we still have a long way to go.

I am not Wabanaki, but a citizen of the Navajo Nation. We recognize that we are all relatives and are all connected. Dine' Bikeyah, my tribe's homeland, covers 27,000 square miles in the southwest. We are one of 570 federally recognized tribes who have fought and won the right to our own self-determination and self-governance. We had to fight the US Government to return to our homelands after being forced to abandon them, and continue to fight to reclaim all of our home and protect all parts of Diné Bikeyah from colonizer harm. We are the best stewards of the lands we come from. The Wabanaki Nations, whose land I currently am a grateful guest of, deserve this same right and autonomy. The Wabanaki Nations deserve the full recognition and treatment of sovereign Nations as other federally recognized tribes do and Maine should no longer stand in the way of these rights.

The idea that something passed over 40 years ago cannot change, adapt or improve is an archaic one. As we work to understand our histories, recognize injustice and do better for our next seven generations, we have to be bold and courageous to make the change that is necessary. In Maine, we are finally having long overdue conversations about race, equity, social justice, and speaking truth to history. If we want to walk this walk, passing LD2007 and continuing the work to restore full and true Tribal Sovereignty is necessary and the time is now. Thank you for your support and attention.

Ahe' hee' for your time and commitment to this work and our state.

April Fournier

She/Her

Dine'