



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of
LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94. I write to you today as a cosponsor of **LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations**.

Over the past 40 years, the Wabanaki Nations have been deprived of accessing federal policies that the other 570 federal tribes across the United States have had access to. These restrictions, imposed by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, have suppressed the Wabanaki, contributing to their higher-than-average levels of health disparities and socioeconomic distress.

LD 2007 would allow the Wabanaki Nations to self govern – a right that is inherently theirs.

According to a recent [Harvard Report](#), and highlighted by the Wabanaki Alliance, sovereignty is beneficial for all. Self-government for the tribes would likely mean an additional \$330 million a year in Maine's Gross Domestic Product, \$39 million a year in state and local tax revenue, and more than 2,700 jobs – 85% of which would be gained by the tribes' neighbors in rural Maine.

During the 129th Legislature, the *Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act* developed [22 consensus recommendations](#), examining the Settlement Act and the Micmac Settlement Act. Many of the recommendations, which were decided upon by a bipartisan task force, focused on restoring the rights of the Wabanaki Nations' to self-govern.

It is time that Maine tribes have jurisdiction over the land they inhabit, the air they breathe and the water they drink. It is time that the Wabanaki Nations gain sovereign authority.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristen Cloutier