

Barbara Vickery
Richmond
LD 14

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, My name is Barbara Vickery. I live in Richmond Maine.

I strongly support LD 14 An Act to Provide Indigenous Peoples Free Access to State Parks. session. The Wabanaki Peoples have a very long and deep connection to the lands on which our state parks are now designated. In most cases these are lands that were in taken from the Wabanaki by ignoring multiple historic treaties.

This bill is a way for the Maine State Government to acknowledge the Wabanaki connection to their homelands. Honoring that connection helps to heal historical trauma. The displacement of Wabanaki Peoples and taking of their land involved more than an economic loss. It disrupted their connection to their culture and identity. LD 14 represents an aspect of the growing movement to recognize the Wabanaki relationship to the land and for governments and institutions to take steps to restore Wabanaki access and stewardship to their traditional territory. By removing the cost to access some of these lands we can help all Indigenous people work towards restoring their connection.

Maine should proudly follow the lead of Minnesota in passing a law granting to the citizens of the federally recognized tribal nations residing in our state free access to its state parks in honor and recognition of long-term Indigenous presence here. I urge the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to vote ought to pass on this bill.