



Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

RE: Support of LD 14, An Act to Provide Indigenous Peoples Free Access to State Parks

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry,

My name is Kaya Lolar, and I am the Policy Coordinator at Maine Environmental Education Association (MEEA) and a citizen of the Panawahpskek (Penobscot) Nation. MEEA is a nonprofit statewide professional network representing over 2000 Maine educators, both classroom teachers and community-based educators at libraries, museums, and science and nature centers. For over 40 years, we have worked to enhance and amplify the efforts of individuals and organizations to build environmental awareness, appreciation, understanding, and action in what is now called Maine. None of this work can be done effectively without recognizing the first peoples of this land, the Wabanaki.

LD 14 would be a small but meaningful step forward, honoring the Wabanaki and the relationship they have held with this land for generations. By promoting access to state parks by removing entry costs, this bill would work towards correcting ongoing injustices by honoring the first stewards of the land.

At MEEA, we are committed in our support of Wabanaki sovereignty and healing, and we urge this committee to take this opportunity to further strengthen state relationships with the Wabanaki Nations. **We stand in full support of LD 14, An Act to Provide Indigenous Peoples Free Access to State Parks.**