



Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony in opposition to LD812, *An Act to Provide State Recognition of the Kineo St. John Tribe*

March 12, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished member of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Cathy Breen. I am the Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Voters (MCV), a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters that is building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. In addition, MCV is a member of the Wabanaki Alliance, a group of over 300 businesses and organizations that recognize the inherent sovereignty and right to self-determination of Wabanaki peoples. I'm speaking today in opposition to **LD812, *An Act to Provide State Recognition of the Kineo St. John Tribe***.

On the surface, this bill may look like one that supports the rights of indigenous peoples in Maine. However, if the bill were to pass, the Kineo St. John Tribe and the individual members of the tribe would still remain subject to all the laws of the State of Maine. LD812 seeks to bypass the federal recognition process established by the Office of Federal Acknowledgement within the Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs. Leaders of the federally recognized Wabanaki Nations believe that this federal process should be the one to determine whether a group merits recognition, not the State of Maine. MCV stands with the Wabanaki Alliance in this position. Recognition by the State of Maine does not create, extend, or form the basis of any right or claim to land or real estate in the state or any right to conduct gambling activities prohibited by law.

MCV urges you to vote Ought Not to Pass. Thank you for your consideration.