

Martha Bentley  
West Gardiner  
LD 813

I would like to submit my opposition to this bill, which undermines the large amount of work that has been done by leaders of the federally recognized Wabanaki Nations to rebuild a good relationship with the State of Maine and co-opts both federal and tribal authority. This bill gives ultimate decision whether to confer state recognition would lie with the Legislature and stipulates that state-recognized Native American Indian tribes and their members remain subject to state law and clarifies that recognition may not be construed to grant any state-recognized tribe or its members any right or claim to land or real estate in Maine. This bypasses the federal recognition process established by the Office of Federal Acknowledgement within the Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs. I believe the federal process should be the one to determine whether a group merits recognition.