

Myke Johnson
Portland
LD 958

I am testifying in support of LD958. I am a retired minister living in Portland Maine. It might seem as if this bill does not affect me, but I want to live in a state that is fair and that respects Wabanaki Nations sovereignty. This bill restores fairness and respects Wabanaki Nations' sovereignty over their lands. LD 958 removes the state of Maine's power to take Wabanaki Nations' tribal land through eminent domain, a protection already afforded to almost all other federally recognized tribes.

Taking tribal land without consultation is against federal policy. Federal law protects most tribal nations from state-level eminent domain, but the 1980 Settlement Acts have resulted in the Wabanaki Nations in Maine being unfairly excluded from these federal protections.

This bill encourages collaboration, not conflict. If a project could truly benefit the public, the state, and the tribes, the state should work with tribal leaders to find a solution. This legislation is a protective measure to guarantee consultation and mutual agreement before any action is taken on tribal lands. It ensures the tribes have a voice.

LD 958 is a step towards justice and fairness. The Wabanaki Nations should not be treated differently from other federally recognized tribes. This bill ensures fairness, respects sovereignty, and prevents future injustices. LD 958 restores the fundamental principle that the Wabanaki Nations are sovereign governments with inherent power to regulate their territories.

Thank you. Rev. Dr. Myke Johnson