

Brian Hinrichs  
Bangor  
LD 958

Dear Representatives,

LD 958 is a critical bill for restoring fairness and respecting Wabanaki Nations' sovereignty over their own lands. By removing language that gives the state eminent domain power over tribal lands, LD 958 restores a fundamental principle that the Wabanaki Nations are sovereign governments with inherent power to regulate their territories.

Penobscot Nation, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Mi'kmaq Nation have been subject to centuries of treaty violation and intentional dispossession by the State of Maine. The 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, with the benefit of hindsight, can objectively be viewed as having caused as much, if not more, harm than good.

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.

LD 958 is a small and sensible step forward in addressing these ills and stopping future land violations via eminent domain. It encourages collaboration and consultation. Most importantly, it ensures tribes have a voice when it comes to the land that is both inherently and legally theirs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Brian Hinrichs  
Bangor, ME