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LD 958

I am writing to support LD 958 because this bill restores fairness and respects Wabanaki Nations' sovereignty over their own lands. No one should have their land taken without consultation or agreement.

I would like to elevate that 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 resulted in the Wabanaki Nations in Maine being unfairly excluded from these federal protections. This is unacceptable. We have proof that there has been harm of eminent domain on Wabanaki lands. For example, Maine Route 190, which cuts through the heart of the Passamaquoddy Reservation at Sipayik, was taken by eminent domain in 1925. I remind you that this decision was made without tribal input. LD 958 would ensure that no such action happens again without tribal consultation.

This bill encourages collaboration, not conflict, something we all should be in support of. 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 to me seems completely logical and considerate. 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 as they should and is long overdue.

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 a fundamental principle that the Wabanaki Nations are sovereign governments with inherent power to regulate their territories. Thank you for your time and consideration.