

Betsy Williams  
Brunswick  
LD 958

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,  
My name is Betsy Williams, I live in Brunswick, and I am writing in support of LD 958, An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands.

As a member of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network, I have joined hundreds if not thousands of other people of faith in annually advocating for bills that advance justice for Wabanaki tribes. LD 958 is the first bill I have seen which places collaboration, not conflict, at its core.

Engaging all parties involved in the use of public land is a big step forward in restoring the respect that the indigenous peoples of Maine deserve. Removing the often-contentious power grab of land by eminent domain will go far in building a new, collaborative tribal/state relationship. Requiring consultation and mutual agreement before any action can be taken on tribal lands gives the Wabanaki a chance to both protect their traditional use of land and help the state develop other land uses for the betterment of all Mainers. Ensuring tribal voices are at the table will strengthen whatever individual decisions are reached. When all parties feel heard, results are inevitably better.

I thank the sponsors for bringing this important step toward justice and fairness to the legislature this session and I urge you to vote OTP on this bill.