

Dear Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn,

I write in favor of passing of LD 958, an Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands.

The benefits of passing LD 958 are multiple, including and also extending beyond benefits to the Wabanaki tribes. While LD 958 does not necessarily always prevent the state from claiming tribal lands, instead it institutes a strong protective policy where such seizure can only happen if both the tribes and the state agree that the transfer of land will benefit the public, including the tribes.

It gives full voice and agency to the Wabanaki as federally recognized tribes.

Passing LD 958 attends to basic human rights in Maine, for no one should have their land taken away from them without prior discussion with and the right to offer meaningful and full consent, should that transfer be agreed by all parties to benefit all parties. This right also includes the tribes' ability to deny consent and to retain lands.

Passing LD 958 will ameliorate some ongoing problems with the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act. It corresponds to the implicit assumption made, in the agreement of MICSA, that the tribes and the state would engage in full conversation, with the tribes having substantive voice, agency, and choice – but this has not always been the case.

Passing LD 958 allows the tribes to gain voice and agency in a manner that aligns with federal policy as regarding federally recognized tribes, bringing the tribe into fuller and more meaningful conversation with the state.

It is vital to the health and wellbeing not only of the tribes but also of the general public, which of course includes the tribes, that Maine respect tribal sovereignty. Such respect is commensurate with Maine's stated agreement with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Passing LD 958 is important for all of us in Maine.

Thank you so much for reading my testimony.

Respectfully,

Claire Millikin Raymond

Owls Head, Maine

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LD 958

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