

Catherine Cyrus
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LD 958

I write in support of LD 958, An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands

Wabanaki tribes in Maine are excluded from federal law that protects almost all other federally recognized tribes from the taking of tribal lands by eminent domain. LD 958 encourages collaboration among the state and the tribes by guaranteeing consultation and mutual agreement before any action is taken that would take tribal lands for public use. It assures that the state will work with tribal leaders to find solutions in situations where a proposed project involving tribal lands could truly benefit the public, the state and the tribes. LD 958 ensures that the Wabanaki tribes have a voice in actions involving Wabanaki lands.

No such consultation or mutual agreement occurred in 1925 when Route 190 was built to cut through the heart of Passamaquoddy Reservation at Sipayik – dividing the reservation's life in community. It is time for Maine to recognize the right of Wabanaki to the protections and benefits provided by federal laws serving most federally recognized tribes across the country. It is time to realize in Maine's laws the wish and will of Maine's citizens that we treat each other with the respect and fairness each of us deserves. The citizens of Maine want and need the stronger and more just community that this bill will help make possible. Please vote in support of LD 985.