

Dr. John Yasenchak
Bangor
LD 958

Dear Legislators

I am writing in regard to LD 958 - An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands.

I had the privilege of working as clinical supervisor and counselor at the Penobscot Nation Health Department for twenty years from 1991-2021. My association with the Wabanaki peoples as well as travels through Indian Country taught me many things. One of the most important learnings was how much tribal - and an individual's identity is tied to home land. The health of a community and indeed the health (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) of individuals is tied to land. A culture is built upon land. Children are raised on the land and families are connected to all the land has to offer.

As you are well aware, the genocide of Indigenous peoples on this continent was profoundly tied to the perceived right to both acquire and remove peoples from their land...a home land occupied for generations upon generations. Land is identity.

The 1980 Settlement Acts have resulted in the Wabanaki Nations in Maine being unfairly excluded from federal protections that are rendered to tribal communities by most states. LD 958 restores fairness and respects Wabanaki Nations' sovereignty over their lands. No one should have their land taken without consultation or agreement. This bill upholds fairness, justice and cooperation.

So for a moment, think about how confiscation of land that you call your own would feel. How might that effect your mental health? Physical health? Spiritual health?

Your kids??? Don't you think that the governments of this country have claimed enough eminent domain over tribal lands already? I am sure you do and I thank you for your concern.

Please give this bill careful and heartfelt support