



April 4, 2025

**Letter in Support of LD 958 “An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands”**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

We are the core staff of First Light, a collective effort across more than sixty non-native conservation organizations working to return land, access, and financial resources to Wabanaki people. As core staff, this comment reflects our combined individual experience and relationships. We are writing to express our support for LD 958, “An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands”.

A key pillar of our work and those in our community is to restore access, land ownership, and decision making to Wabanaki Nations and their citizens in their homelands. We believe this creates a better future for all of us.

With this return of land ownership we must provide full, unrestricted opportunities for the sovereign Wabanaki Nations to care for those lands and waters. The specter of eminent domain—as well as other limitations on Wabanaki sovereignty—limit the possibility for this care. Wabanaki communities are making an intergenerational commitment to this land, as evidenced by the creation of the Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship and its land relations fund, alongside many other efforts from Wabanaki Nations and community groups. LD 958 offers an opportunity to support that long term care. We also appreciate that this bill creates space for greater collaboration and communication between Wabanaki Nations and the State of Maine when issues of true public benefit arise.

Additionally, LD 958 is another step towards amending the 1980 Act to Implement the Maine Indian Claims Settlement and the 2023 Mi'kmaq Nation Restoration Act. Any steps that address inequities in these acts are important steps in the right direction for Wabanaki communities and our shared home.

We urge the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to vote “ought to pass” on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signed respectfully,

First Light Core Staff  
Brett Ciccotelli, Otto Muller, and Eliza Oldach