

April 4, 2025

Dear Members of the Maine State Legislature's Committee On Judiciary,

My name is Hadriane Hatfield, and I'm a resident of Portland. I am writing to urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 958, "An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands."

Currently, Maine law allows the state to seize territory from the Penobscot Nation, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, and the Mi'kmaq Nation. This law is unjust and unacceptable. It violates the sovereignty of Wabanaki Nations and further limits their ability to thrive economically, politically, and socially, and it stands contrary to federal policy. Most other federally-recognized tribes are not subject to state-level eminent domain.

Maine's ability to seize Tribal land through eminent domain has already caused actual harm. The State of Maine seized Passamaquoddy land at Sipayik to build Route 190 without consulting the Tribe. There is a long history in the United States (and Maine is no exception) of building roadways, utilities, factories, and chemical or power plants on or near Native Nations' territories/reservations, as well as neighborhoods predominantly inhabited by people of color. This practice has contributed to concentrated poverty and harmed the health of generations of people. Passing LD 958 would help prevent that from continuing in Maine.

Not only is recognizing Wabanaki sovereignty the *right* thing to do, it has widespread and bipartisan support in Maine. In 2023, the Maine House and Senate passed LD 2004, An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations, with support from across the political spectrum. Later that year, 74% of Mainers—an overwhelming majority—voted yes on Question 6, amending the printed version of the Maine State Constitution to reflect Maine's obligations to Wabanaki Nations.

Maine legally recognizing Wabanaki Nations' sovereignties is *essential* for building reciprocal, mutually supportive relationships and ensuring that we all have equal access to freedom, justice, and opportunity. Prohibiting eminent domain on Tribal Lands is a necessary step in that direction.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 958.

Sincerely,

Hadriane Hatfield