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**Testimony of Nancy Smith, CEO of GrowSmart Maine  
in support of LD 958 An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands**

April 4, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

My name is Nancy Smith, I live in Ellsworth, and I am the CEO of GrowSmart Maine. We are a statewide non-partisan non-profit organization helping communities navigate change in alignment with smart growth. We advocate for comprehensive policies and funding for smart growth practices and outcomes.

Equity is integral to smart growth, in which the overarching vision is that people feel safe, that they belong, and that they can thrive in their communities.

This bill incorporates equity into Maine's eminent domain laws by updating the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act to prevent eminent domain under state law. It acknowledges that the relationship between the Wabanaki Nations and the State of Maine is unique, and respects their sovereignty over their lands.

From a process point of view, this bill encourages collaboration, not conflict. If a project could truly benefit the public, the state, and the tribes, the state should work with tribal leaders to find a solution.

We encourage the committee to pass this bill, and GrowSmart Maine is willing to assist the committee in any way that is helpful.