

Olivia Griset
Maine Environmental Education Association
LD 958

Olivia Griset
Executive Director
Maine Environmental Education Association
olivia@meeassociation.org
April 3, 2025

Joint Standing Committee of the Judiciary

RE: LD 958 An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands

Senator Karney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Committee of the Judiciary,

My name is Olivia Griset, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Environmental Education Association (MEEA). On behalf of MEEA I am submitting testimony in support of LD 958, An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal lands. Thank you to Representative Faulkingham, and the bill's cosponsors for recognizing the importance of this initiative.

MEEA is a statewide nonprofit organization, with over 2,000 members, that supports the advancement of outdoor and environmental learning. Being a nature-based organization, MEEA is also a member of the Wabanaki Alliance, and is working actively to counter the erasure of Wabanaki history and culture through the power of education.

MEEA is in strong support of LD 958 because it is a necessary step toward justice, fairness, and respect for the sovereignty of the Wabanaki Nations.

LD 958 would prohibit the state from taking tribal land through eminent domain without consultation or agreement—an essential protection that nearly all other federally recognized tribes already have under federal law. The Wabanaki Nations should not be treated differently.

Historically, eminent domain has been used to take Wabanaki lands without consent, as seen in 1925 when Maine Route 190 was built through the Passamaquoddy Reservation at Sipayik. This should never happen again. The ability of a sovereign nation to control its own land is fundamental, and LD 958 ensures that future decisions are made through collaboration, not unilateral state action.

This bill does not prevent progress; it promotes mutual respect. If a project is truly in the public interest, the state should work with tribal leaders to find a solution—not impose one.

LD 958 is about fairness, consistency, and ensuring that the Wabanaki Nations have the same rights as other tribes across the country. I urge you to support this bill and uphold the sovereignty and dignity of Maine's Tribal Nations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.