



Maine Equal Justice

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MEJ Testimony in Support of LD 958, *An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands*

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Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Dina Malual, I use she/her pronouns, and I am a Policy Advocate with Maine Equal Justice (MEJ), a nonprofit legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine. We are pleased to testify in support of LD 958.

Maine Equal Justice strongly supports the opportunity to correct historically exclusive laws that prohibit all four of Maine's Wabanaki Nations (Passamaquoddy Tribe, Penobscot Nation, Mi'kmaq Nation and Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians) the right to maintain Wabanaki land. LD 958 encourages collaboration and ensures Wabanaki Nations have sovereignty over their own lands. If passed, this bill would restore some federal protection already afforded to almost all federally recognized tribes.

History shows the harm of eminent domain on Wabanaki lands. In 1925, Passamaquoddy Reservation at Sipayik was taken by eminent domain to make room for Maine Route 190.¹ LD 958 would ensure that this does not happen again. Rather than stealing land from Wabanaki Nations, this bill restores fairness and promotes collaboration, ultimately allowing Wabanaki people to make decisions about their land.

Lawmakers have the opportunity to further collaborate with the Wabanaki people to continue making significant strides that benefit all of Maine's Tribes. Maine Equal Justice is deeply committed to correcting Maine's history of unfair treatment of the Wabanaki Nations and looks forward to continued efforts to equitably include Wabanaki Nations in our laws. Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts with you today. We urge the committee to vote in support of LD 958 to bring us closer to a sovereign nation for the Wabanaki people.

¹ <https://www.wabanakialliance.com/support-ld958/>