



SUIT UP MAINE

April 4, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kelli Whitlock Burton and I am a resident of Waldoboro and co-leader of Suit Up Maine, an independent, all-volunteer constituent action group representing more than 5,000 Mainers in all 16 counties. I offer this testimony in support of LD 958, "An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands."

Sponsors and supporters of this bipartisan bill recognize the urgent need to amend the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act and the 2023 Mi'kmaq Nation Restoration Act to prevent the state from seizing Wabanaki land through the right of eminent domain. Maine history shows why such a law is needed. In 1925, the state of Maine exercised eminent domain to take state Route 190, which runs through the Passamaquoddy Reservation at Sipayik. That action was taken without any tribal input. LD 958 would block such a seizure by creating a fair process for future projects involving tribal lands that would give the state and tribal representatives an equal voice in finding a solution that works for all.

Protection from eminent domain is a right already afforded to almost all other federally recognized tribes. LD 958 is but one step toward restoration of full Wabanaki sovereignty, the inherent right of tribes to govern themselves. But it is an important step toward justice for the Wabanaki that has for far too long been denied. We urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 958.

Sincerely,

Karin Leuthy
Founder & Co-Leader
Camden, ME

Kelli Whitlock Burton
Co-Leader
Waldoboro, ME