

Committee on Judiciary, Attn: Susan Pinette
c/o Legislative Information Office
State House, Room 438
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: LD 958: *An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Wabanaki Land*

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and other members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I am submitting my testimony as a resident of Glenburn, and a clinical social worker who practices and teaches in the Bangor area, in support of LD 958: *An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Wabanaki Land*.

This bill would amend the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act and the 2023 Mi'kmaq Nation Restoration Act to prevent the state from taking Wabanaki land for public uses. By taking this important step of removing language that gives the state eminent domain power over tribal lands, LD 958 restores a fundamental principle that the Wabanaki Nations are sovereign governments with inherent power to regulate their territories.

This bill would restore fairness, and respects the Wabanaki Nations sovereignty over their own lands. As a resident of Maine who has raised my children here, and also a social worker who teaches and practices here, it has been very important to me to be a respectful neighbor to the Wabanaki Nations. I believe that when the Wabanaki thrive, we all thrive, and I want that for my now young adult children. Given the historical harms toward the Wabanaki people that social workers have taken part in, and the ongoing systemic problems caused by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, I feel it is imperative that our state take steps to make changes to respect the Wabanaki Nations inherent sovereignty. This bill is an incredibly important opportunity to be fair and not cause more harm through eminent domain.

As social workers, it is critical in social justice efforts to both listen and take action. It also means doing the critical introspective work to deepen our understanding of how our profession of social work has harmed the Wabanaki people. A big part of that work is to take action with humility when invited by the Wabanaki Nations. The Wabanaki Nations have invited their settler neighbors to join with them to support recognition of their inherent sovereignty. To truly center our relationship work with the Wabanaki Nations, we know we must work to change policy and systems for equity and respect of the Wabanaki people and the health of our state. Supporting this legislation is a critical step to work toward being in respectful relationship with the Wabanaki.

It is for all of these reasons that I ask that you support LD 958!

Sincerely,

Ann Hartman

Ann Hartman LCSW
Glenburn