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**ATTN: LD 1543 “An Act to Establish the Green Schools Network”**

Dear Chairman Rafferty & Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

As an Indigenous person and educator living in Wabanaki Territory, also called Maine, I strongly support the passage of the LD 1543 “An Act to Establish the Green Schools Network”. This legislation presents an opportunity to advance sustainable practices in schools while saving money, fostering student engagement, and strengthening collaboration among Wabanaki leaders, state agencies, educators, students, and community organizations. This powerful alliance can drive meaningful, lasting change in our schools and communities, ensuring that students in Maine build sustainability in their schools and understand how to create change in their communities through shared action and purpose.

This bill will establish a network to promote a practical, locally driven approach that aligns with community-based problem-solving to improve school infrastructure and curriculum while facilitating knowledge-sharing among those with common goals.

During my 13 years of engaging youth leaders and teaching in schools in Maine, I witnessed firsthand the transformative power of sustainability initiatives. I know how important it is for youth to feel heard and to have opportunities to learn accurate history, which involves relation to land and place, as well as to learn and participate in their culture. This bill would ensure that work is sustainable and would allow us to address persistent educational and health disparities in our local communities.

I urge you to support this critical investment in Maine’s schools for the students in those schools. Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill.

Thank you,

Saige Purser