

My name is Aidan Sites, I am a proud Mainer, and I am urging the Maine State Legislature to vote YES on LD 1474: An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools. I am a conservation biologist and am so grateful to have grown up in Maine, surrounded by so much magnificent wilderness. These natural spaces are what inspire me, keep my spirit alive, and ground me in our common origins and humanity. We are part of these wonders of the natural world, and I wouldn't have it any other way. The breath you breathe right now is thanks to the natural processes happening all around us. As a Colby College graduate, I continued deepening my understanding of and appreciation of our natural world, while also learning more about the influential role humans have on our planet, sometimes negatively and sometimes positively. It wasn't until I reached my university level of education in Maine that I finally began to learn more intimately about the histories of the Wabanaki peoples and the cultural teachings that instruct on how to live in deeper harmony with our natural world. I think it is high time that we begin introducing children in all levels of education about the Wabanaki Nation. Maine is one of the most beautiful natural states in this country, and yet we are far behind many other states in the recognition and honoring of the indigenous peoples that were here first, the ones that have been stewards for the natural world for eons. Perhaps by rectifying this wrong, and introducing education of Wabanaki Studies, we can start taking strides in the right direction of repairing the damages brought out by extractive and exploitative customs seen in our state and much of the country. I am proud to be a Mainer, but would be even prouder if we made reparations in the honoring of the indigenous peoples of this place: the Wabanaki Nation. VOTE YES ON LD 1474.