

# Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: April 22, 2025

Re: LD 1474, An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I live in Bar Harbor and represent Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), a coalition of fifteen nonprofit organizations from across Maine united by a desire to progress our state forward and take the necessary actions to address the ongoing climate crisis.

Our coalition stands in solidarity with the Penobscot Nation, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Mi'kmaq Nation and recognizes there is no true climate justice without the inclusion of these and other tribes. Engaging in accurate Maine history in the state's education system means including Wabanaki stories and perspectives. Only when we dive into Maine history head on, with intention spent fully understanding all perspectives, can we truly overcome past injustices and begin the difficult, but necessary, process of creating the world together that we all deserve to live in.

We support LD 1474 because, although Wabanaki studies have been a mandated part of Maine education for over 20 years, teachers have not always been adequately prepared to teach this subject. A 2022 report found "...the law is not meaningfully enforced across the state" and "despite some successes, school districts have failed to consistently and appropriately include Wabanaki Studies in their curriculum."<sup>1</sup>

In this regard, Maine is falling behind other states, like [Minnesota](#), [Montana](#), and [Oregon](#), which have rightfully devoted state resources towards Indigenous studies. LD 1474 will begin to set Maine on a similar path through the creation of a permanent position within the Department of Education. This Wabanaki Studies Specialist will help assist future teachers with curricular and professional development to adequately prepare them to teach Wabanaki Studies.

For the above-listed reasons, we encourage you to vote "ought-to-pass" on LD 1474. Thank you.

---

<sup>1</sup>Abbe Museum et al. "[The Wabanaki Studies Law: 21 Years After Implementation](#)", October 2, 2022. Accessed April 22, 2025, pp. 4-6.