

Tessa Storey  
Southwest Harbor  
LD 1474

To the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

I am writing in strong support of LD 1474, An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools. I am an outdoor educator and Registered Maine Guide with great admiration for the land I live on and a passion for helping people feel seen, heard, and valued. My work centers on helping adolescents build self-knowledge and resilience through connection to place, and it's through this lens that I see just how vital this bill is.

LD 1474 offers a long overdue step toward honoring the legal and moral responsibility to teach Wabanaki Studies in our schools. It's not enough for the mandate to exist on paper, as it has since 2001, if it is not implemented with intention, accountability, and the leadership of Wabanaki people themselves.

Including Wabanaki perspectives in the curriculum - not as a side note or an afterthought, but as a vital and living part of Maine's story - is powerful and will positively impact Native and non-Native students alike. For Native youth, it affirms the visibility and value of their cultures. For non-Native youth, it corrects the silence that we've held surrounding Indigenous histories, contributions, and sovereignty in our state, and models what honesty and accountability in education look like.

As someone whose life's work revolves around connection—to the land, to history, to each other—I believe this bill supports a more honest and compassionate Maine. One where all students learn that the Wabanaki Nations are not a relic of the past, but sovereign and vital communities who have always been, and continue to be, the first stewards of this place.

Thank you for your time and for supporting a future where truth, representation, and respect are non-negotiable in Maine's classrooms.

Sincerely,

Tessa Storey,  
Southwest Harbor, Maine