



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
From: David Gibson, Sierra Club Maine Chapter Volunteer
Date: April 21, 2025
Re: **Testimony in Support of L.D. 1474, An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools**

Senator Raferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

I am testifying on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members and supporters nation-wide. We urge you to support L.D. 1474, An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools.

I was born and raised in Maine. I attended public schools for all of my education until I left the state for college. For middle school, I attended Molly Ockett Middle School in Fryeburg. Despite the school being named after Abenaki woman Mali Agat, we learned more about Mesopotamia and the fertile crescent than we did about the native Wabanaki people who lived in Maine in the same time period ~12,000 years ago, or any time period from then on.

LD 1474 supports enrichment of Maine school resources and activities. The bill would fund a Wabanaki studies specialist to oversee and coordinate educators' efforts, along with funding for Wabanaki advisors. It would also provide funds for which school administrative districts can apply to support Wabanaki Studies activities and resources. The Wabanaki people have a rich history and culture. I hope that all future students in Maine will have the opportunity to learn more about the Wabanaki in school.

Please vote Ought to Pass on L.D. 1474.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Sierra Club Maine,

David Gibson