

Maulian Bryant
Wabanaki Alliance
LD 1900

Testimony in Support of LD 1900: An act to Bring Parity to the Recognition of the Wabanaki Nations' Authority to Provide Electric Power Districts and Child Support Enforcement

Submitted by Maulian Bryant on Behalf of the Wabanaki Alliance

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Maulian Bryant and I am a Penobscot Nation Tribal Citizen and serve as the Executive Director of the Wabanaki Alliance. We were formed by the Wabanaki tribal nations in our homelands now called Maine to work together to restore the recognition of our inherent tribal sovereignty. Our Board of Directors, taking direction from the Tribal Chiefs, fully supports LD 1900 from Passamaquoddy Tribal Representative and Wabanaki Alliance board member Aaron Dana.

In 2007, the 123rd Maine State Legislature passed LD 229: An Act to Facilitate the Establishment of Tribal Utility Districts. This bill established the right of the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot Nations to establish their own utility districts in Maine. These tribal power districts have a right to "furnish electric power transmission, distribution and supply services" within tribal territories. It also allows the tribal power districts to "generate or manufacture electricity within the district or to purchase, acquire, accumulate or sell electricity at wholesale or by private contract for use within the tribal power district." The terms of this statute limit the distribution of electric power to only within tribal power districts and only within tribal territories. It does not allow the sale of electricity to entities outside of the tribal power districts. LD 1900 simply amends this already established statute to include the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Mi'kmaq Nation. A primary goal behind the creation of this bill is the continued pursuit of equal opportunities and parity between the Wabanaki Nations.

The other half of the bill deals with the authority of Tribal Courts to enforce the collection of child support. Over the past few years, the Houlton Band of Maliseets has been working on establishing and expanding a Maliseet Tribal Court. LD 1900 would expand the rights of the Maliseet Tribal Court to allow the court to enforce the collection of child support payments. This is a right that is currently already practiced by the Penobscot Tribal Court and LD 1900 would take a further step in bringing parity and equal opportunity and authority between the tribal nations in Maine.

The purpose of this legislation is to facilitate fairness between all of the tribes when it comes to these two areas of how we provide for our people and manage our resources. The Wabanaki Alliance is united in this goal and we urge you to vote ought to pass. I am happy to take any questions and thank you.