

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

From: Leslie Pohl, Portland, ME 04102

Date: 2/16/26

Re: Support for LD 785, An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act

My name is **Leslie Pohl** and I live in **Portland, ME**. I am writing to testify in **support of LD 785**. I work at the University of Southern Maine and over many years I have learned about history of the Wabanaki people in Maine, and particularly about the details of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) and The Maine Implementing Act (MIA).

LD 785 is a step in the right direction to address the harm that the State of Maine (and prior to that the State of Massachusetts) has inflicted on the Wabanaki people.

For over 300 years, white settlers and our government have offered scalp bounties, taken Wabanaki treaty lands, and purposefully dammed rivers and destroyed fishing grounds (with the intent of starving the Wabanaki people and driving them away). Ultimately, the Wabanaki people who survived were left in abject poverty on small reservations. MICSA and MIA were an attempt to compensate the tribes for all of this but fell short in many ways including taking away their tribal sovereignty.

It is time to begin to right the wrongs of this sordid past and **pass LD785** which would implement many of the 22 consensus recommendations reached by a bipartisan task force in 2020 (tasked to review MICSA's effectiveness). The Wabanaki tribes have never ceded their sovereignty and it's time to recognize their inherent right to self-govern.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony and for supporting LD 785!