

Testimony in Support of LD 785 and LD 395

Please accept my written testimony in support of LD 785 and LD 395; both would expand Wabanaki sovereignty. The first, LD 785, would protect Wabanaki rights by restoring tribal self-government to tribes in Maine. The second, LD 395, would extend to the Wabanaki Nations most existing and future federal laws that already apply to the other 570 federally recognized tribes.

I believe that at this moment in our country, it is essential to look beyond the limits of our current social and economic systems and learn from cultures that have sustained healthy relationships with land and community for thousands of years. Indigenous nations hold knowledge systems that are relational, place-based, and grounded in long-term stewardship. Supporting Indigenous sovereignty is not only a matter of justice—it is also an opportunity for all of us to learn from ways of living that have proven resilient across generations. As we face increasing instability in our social, ecological, and economic structures, it becomes even more important to uplift perspectives that emphasize balance, reciprocity, and responsibility to the land and to one another.

By affirming the sovereignty of Wabanaki and other Indigenous nations, Maine creates space for these knowledge systems to thrive on their own terms. In doing so, we open the door for deeper learning, stronger relationships, and the possibility of more sustainable approaches to the challenges our society is struggling to navigate.

The Wabanaki have been protecting the environment and maintaining sustainable ecological practices for millennia, long before European settlement of Maine. They should be allowed to continue to do so; and “others” may indeed learn from this.

The politicians who drafted the 1980 Settlement Act called it a [“living document”](#) meant to be updated. The law itself allows Maine, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Penobscot Nation to amend it. After more than 40 years of harm, it’s time to modernize this broken deal.

LD 395 puts the Wabanaki Nations on equal footing with all other federally recognized tribes.

Currently, the Wabanaki Nations are the only federally recognized tribes that must be explicitly written into each federal law to benefit from it. LD 395 would modernize the *1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act* (MICSA) and the *Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act* so that the Wabanaki Nations can benefit from most existing and future federal laws that apply to the other 570 federally recognized tribes.

LD 785 levels the playing field for the Wabanaki Nations.

For 40 years, restrictions in the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) have blocked the Wabanaki Nations from accessing all of the federal self-determination policies that helped 570 other tribes create thousands of jobs and generate hundreds of millions in economic activity.

John krueger
Northport
LD 395

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