

Alban MAINO
South Portland
LD 785

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my support for LD 785, An Act to Enact Recommendations on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act.

LD 785 advances a set of widely supported, consensus recommendations developed through a bipartisan task force convened to review the effectiveness of the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement framework. The bill addresses core issues that are fundamental to a fair and functional government-to-government relationship, including: tribal court jurisdiction, natural resource regulation on tribal lands, taxation authority, and trust land acquisition. These updates would align the rights and authorities of the four Wabanaki Nations—the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Penobscot Nation, Mi'kmaq Nation, and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians—with the standards applied to other federally recognized tribal nations across the United States.

For more than four decades, Maine's approach has too often treated the Wabanaki Nations more like municipalities than sovereign governments. That is not only inconsistent with how tribal nations are recognized elsewhere; it has also limited opportunities for stable economic development and effective dispute resolution. Research and policy analysis have made clear that moving toward parity can support job creation, investment, and stronger rural economies, benefiting both Wabanaki communities and neighboring towns. I also appreciate that LD 785 includes a practical mechanism for resolving disputes between the State and the Wabanaki Nations—an essential ingredient for long-term stability and mutual trust.

As a Maine resident and community leader, I believe Maine can do better by strengthening its relationship with the Wabanaki Nations through fairness, clarity, and respect. LD 785 is a responsible step in that direction, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration.

Respectfully,
Alban Maino