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LD 785

I am writing in support of LD 785 because the Wabanaki Nations deserve the recognition and rights afforded to the other 570 recognized tribes. Self-determination has public support, bipartisan legislative support, social justice and business community support for good reason. The well-known Harvard study shows how self-determination can vastly improve the economy of both tribal and their neighboring communities.

In Maine we pride ourselves as champions of wildlife, wilderness, sustainable land use and responsible outdoor recreation. We must acknowledge this has also been at the heart of the Wabanaki Nations for millennia before the arrival of settlers.

Recognizing tribal knowledge is essential to solving our ecological failures. Collaboration requires a bedrock of trust and Maine's legislative attitude needs a course correction.

Self-determination invites respect, honor, dialog and resolutions. In its absence progress and trust have been stunted for years, mired in a paternalistic pattern of piecemeal offerings and vetoes.

I urge you to open a path to growth and dignity by voting ought to pass for LD 785.