



BASKAHEGAN COMPANY

18 February 2026

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Baskahegan is a fourth-generation family company which owns and manages 150,000 acres of timberland, primarily in northern Washington County. I am its Chair. I urge you to support of LD 395.

I suspect that every one of us is proud to be a Maine citizen and believes that Maine is an extraordinary place. We celebrate the beauty and productivity of our lands and waters, the civility of our political culture and the authenticity of our people. That said, Maine is also exceptional in a negative way due to our centuries-long history of frustrating nearly every effort of Wabanaki peoples to advance themselves and their neighbors. The primary hammer used by the State has been language slipped into the 1980 Settlement Act at the last moment--in violation of the agreement among negotiators that nothing would be added by one side without the approval of the other. The State has relentlessly used this language (in section 16b) to prevent the application in Maine of federal Laws that benefit Indians.

Puzzled by the long-standing animosity of State leadership toward the tribes, my friend Evan Richert spent the last two years digging into the historical record. Evan served on the Maine Tribal State Commission during the administration of Governor King. He was troubled by how representatives of the State had routinely refused to work with the tribes to solve problems caused by the Settlement Act. They relied repeatedly on this suspect language to effectively veto federal laws benefitting tribes. Our reading of the history makes clear that section 16b effectively overturned carefully negotiated language elsewhere in the Act that affirmed Tribal control over their internal affairs "except as otherwise provided for in this bill." Those exceptions had been narrowly drawn, and the rest of the bill was written to further Wabanaki sovereignty over their own affairs.

The Tribes in Maine would never have negotiated a settlement based on their sovereignty as federally recognized tribes only to give their power away in the last paragraph at the last minute. The language was inserted without their approval. It is beyond time to correct this historical and continuing wrong. Please vote to approve LD 395.

Sincerely

Roger Milliken