

February 18, 2026

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

From: MELISSA PRESCOTT, 12 WALKER AVE., NORWAY, ME, 04268

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

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Melissa Prescott and I live in Norway, Maine. I am sorry I am unable to attend the public hearing on LD 785, but I am grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support of this important bill.

I support LD 785 because it will help restore fairness and equal treatment for the Wabanaki Nations in Maine. For more than 40 years, the Wabanaki Nations in Maine have been treated differently from every other federally recognized tribe in the United States. This bill focuses on correcting state laws that restrict how tribes govern themselves compared to tribes in other states.

LD 785 would implement many of the 22 consensus recommendations reached by a bipartisan task force in 2020. These recommendations address tribal court jurisdiction; hunting, fishing, and natural resource regulation on tribal lands; taxation authority; and trust land acquisition. Together, these changes would bring the rights and authority of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Penobscot Nation, Mi'kmaq Nation, and Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians in line with those of the other 570 federally recognized tribes across the country.

Restoring full tribal self-government is also a clear economic win for Maine. Harvard researchers project that it would add \$330 million annually to Maine's GDP, create more than 2,700 jobs - more than half filled by non-tribal rural Mainers - and generate \$39 million each year in state and local tax revenue. When the Wabanaki thrive, all of Maine thrives. LD 785 would remove unnecessary barriers that have cost our state decades of growth and opportunity.

Supporting LD 785 is about fairness, economic strength, and respect. It does not create special treatment - it ends unequal treatment.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote **Ought to Pass** on this long-overdue legislation.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the justice of all Mainers.

Sincerely,

Melissa Prescott, she/her

12 Walker Ave.

Norway, ME 04268