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LD 785

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee, I am writing to testify in support of LD 785.

I support this bill because I support tribal sovereignty as articulated by the Wbanaki Alliance. When I first moved to Maine I was deeply impressed with its culture. However I was disturbed to learn that the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) wrongfully (as it seems to me) overstepped tribal sovereignty to a shocking degree, far more than other states. This situation is completely at odds with Maine's character, has no defensible rationale, and has caused 40 years of intense, additional economic hardship.

As a Maine resident, it is of the utmost importance to me that these laws be changed. The current framework wastes public money as unnecessary legal disputes grapple with the inherent contradictions between the sovereign status of the Wabanaki Alliance members, and the limitations of the MICSA.

More importantly, I think it is the right thing to do. Maine's current policies have weighed heavily on my conscience as a resident since the first weeks of moving to Maine years ago. Please pass this bill to protect vital rights of Wabanaki Alliance member nations including but not limited to criminal jurisdiction, environmental and land regulation, the collection of taxes, and the acquisition of land.

These issues matter to me personally. My trust in Maine's state government and my willingness to encourage friends from other states to move here would be greatly enhanced by passing this bill.

I thank the committee for this opportunity to testify in support of LD 785.