

Sophie Schuele  
Brunswick  
LD 785

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Committee on Judiciary,  
My name is Sophie, and I am a scientist working in a manufacturing lab in  
Cumberland, Maine. I grew up in Brunswick, and I recently graduated from college  
and moved back to Portland.

I am testifying in support of LD 785, An Act to Enact the Remaining  
Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims  
Settlement Implementing Act, because the issue of indigenous rights is incredibly  
important to me.

I am extremely proud of being a Mainer. I love this state because of the nature  
surrounding us, and because of the amazing local restaurants, shops, bakeries, outdoor  
recreation opportunities, and seasonal traditions. But access to all of these things is  
not guaranteed when living in Maine, especially not in rural communities. And our  
Wabanaki communities are excluded from these privileges systematically.

Until all individuals of the Wabanaki Nations have the economic freedom and access  
to self determination that the colonizers (myself included) enjoy, I cannot truly be  
proud of the Maine I call home. Restrictions in the 1980 Maine Indian Claims  
Settlement Act have stymied economic growth and social mobility for the Wabanaki  
people for decades, trapping these communities in a cycle of poverty more severe  
than statewide levels. Maine is a tight knit community, and we proudly look after  
each other. LD 785 provides an opportunity for our community to live out our values.

On another note, we are able to experience Maine's renowned natural beauty thanks  
to the environment protection and maintenance efforts of generations of Wabanaki  
people. Maine's modern towns and communities were able to gain capital and prosper  
because of the healthy fisheries and abundant timber resources that we are now  
exploiting. Legally returning the right to self determination is just the first step  
towards a more just Maine and towards a more sustainable future.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage you to support LD 785. Thank you for  
your time and consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,  
Sophie