

Meret Bainbridge
Saco
LD 395

Meret Bainbridge, Saco, Maine

Valued members of the committee on Judiciary,

I support passage of LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to Wabanaki Nations.

The four tribes that comprise the Wabanaki Nations - Penobscot Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and Mi'kmaq Nation - are the ONLY federally recognized tribes who are excluded from federal Indian legislation unless they are explicitly written into such legislation, because of a clause written into the settlement acts of 1980 that was added towards the end of negotiations.

They have been left behind the other 570 federally recognized tribes and been excluded of 45 years of legislation benefitting other tribes, 45 years of missed economic opportunities for not only the tribes but rural Maine, and 45 years of denial of their inherent sovereignty to govern themselves.

It's past time to follow the recommendations of the bipartisan task force report of 2020 and modernize this law to restore self-governance and increase economic opportunities for the Wabanaki Nations.

I urge you to vote OTP on LD 395.