



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association in Support of:  
LD 395: An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations**

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
State House, Room 438  
Thursday, February 19, 2026

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Rebecca Boulos, and I am the executive director of Maine Public Health Association.

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent nearly 950 individual and 80 organizational members across the state, and our mission is to advance the health of all people and places in Maine.

MPHA is in support of LD 395: "An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations."

The Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) of 1980 established a different, more restrictive status for Wabanaki tribes than that of all other 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States. MICSA dictates that when Congress passes legislation that impacts federally-recognized tribes, which includes the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Mi'kmaq Nation, the Passamaquoddy Tribes at Motahkomikuk and Sipayik, and the Penobscot Nation, each of these tribes must be explicitly named in the bill's text in order to receive any of the legislation's benefits. This incredible and unjust burden is unique to the Wabanaki Nations; all other federally recognized tribes are, by default, included. Accordingly, MICSA has prevented Wabanaki Nations from benefiting from more than 150 federal laws, including for drinking water protection, health care access, economic development, and other public and community health endeavors.

Everyone deserves just and fair opportunities to obtain good health. Tribal citizens in Maine have faced unjust and unfair conditions that influence health – including contaminated drinking water, food insecurity, cultural disrespect, unsafe housing, hampered economic development, and poverty. We believe this bill is a matter of fairness and justice, and that its passage will improve public health for Wabanaki Nations. We respectfully request you to please vote LD 395 "Ought to Pass." Thank you for your consideration.