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LD 785

Currently, the Wabanaki Nations are the only federally recognized tribes that must be explicitly written into each federal law to benefit from it. Due to these stipulations in the 1980 Settlement Act, the Wabanaki have been denied full participation in federal programs promoting tribal health and wellness, economic development, and tribal infrastructure and community safety.

In 2022, the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development stated that the impacts of tribal sovereignty for the Wabanaki Nations would lead to an increase in Maine's GDP of \$330 million per year and create over 2,000 new jobs for non-tribal Mainers.

The provisions of LD 785 would correct the unfair burdens placed upon the Wabanaki people and strengthen all Maine communities economically and improve the health and well-being of all Maine residents. I have lived on an Indian reservation in a western state and worked for the tribal college there. At the time, each dollar of revenue from a tribally-run Job Corps circulated through the local economies eleven times before exiting the area. A similar dynamic would occur in Maine as contracts and services spill over into non-tribal communities.

Tribal sovereignty can be defined as 'the right of tribes to govern their communities, to preserve their culture, and to control their own economies and properties.' Our Wabanaki neighbors deserve as much from us, and passing LD 785 would be a benefit to us all, tribal and non-tribal, alike.

The Maine Indian Claims Task Force recommendations have had broad bipartisan and bicameral support. LD 785 implements the remaining task force recommendations that are greatly needed and long overdue. Doing so helps to correct years of unjust and unethical treatment towards Native people within the boundaries of Maine. Please, I implore the you support its passage.

Thank You,