



***Wabanaki Alliance Testimony in Support of LD 1054: An Act to Amend the Laws
Governing Conservation Easements
Submitted by Maulian Bryant, Executive Director***

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Plueker and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. My name is Maulian Bryant, I am a Penobscot Nation Tribal Citizen and serve as Executive Director of the Wabanaki Alliance. I present this testimony on behalf of the Wabanaki Alliance in support of LD 1054 as amended and we thank Representative Dill for bringing this forward as well as all everyone who has worked hard getting this bill set into motion.

The Wabanaki Alliance was formed in 2020 by leaders of all of the tribal nations in our homelands now called Maine to advocate for tribal priorities and educate about the need for the restoration of the recognition of tribal sovereignty.

We support this bill because self determination and the struggles for rights for our people have always had land as a central issue. The 1980 Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act exists as the result of the tribes and the federal government holding Maine to account for the taking of most of the state without ratification of the treaties. The issues of stewardship over lands, access to land, and protection and management of natural resources are ever present in all of the work on tribal sovereignty.

This bill speaks to access to land and how this access can enhance tribal cultural practices and identity while simultaneously protecting parcels of land and preserving sacred spaces.

These two pieces to this amended version of the bill are important steps forward. By expanding the definition of conservation easement to include the preservation of history, architectural, archaeological, and cultural aspects as well as including federally recognized tribes as potential holders of these easements we all make progress in the rights of Wabanaki people as well as the health and wellbeing of the land herself.

We thank our partners and the tribal leaders who have long championed the restoration of land access. We urge you to vote ought to pass and I am happy to take any questions.