

John Maddaus
Council on Indigenous Relations of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine
LD 1054

Testimony of the Council on Indigenous Relations of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine
In Support of LD 1054, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Conservation
Easements

Submitted for the Public Hearing Before the Joint Standing Committee on
Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, February 24th, 2026.

Senator Rachel Talbot Ross, Representative Bill Pluecker, and members of the
Committee, my name is John Maddaus, and I serve as chair of the Legislative
Committee of the Council on Indigenous Relations, Episcopal Diocese of Maine.
Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of LD 1054, as amended.
The Episcopal Council of Indigenous Relations (originally the Episcopal Committee
on Indian Relations) was formed by resolution of the Diocesan Convention in 1991.
For 35 years, we have lived into our mission “to deepen our relationship with the
Wabanaki of Maine, to stand with the tribes in the pursuit of justice, to affirm their
inherent sovereignty, and to support the preservation of Native languages and
culture.”

This bill as amended, would clarify that “federally recognized Indian tribes” (the
Wabanaki nations) can hold conservation easements on the same basis as land trusts
and municipalities in Maine, and that the purposes for such easements can include
preservation of “the historical, architectural, archaeological or cultural aspects of a
property”.

We know that historically, the Wabanaki have done what is best for the land. It
makes sense that they can use this conservation tool to extend their stewardship. They
have been protectors of this land for over ten thousand years, and they have a stellar,
exemplary record of land conservation. We are in support of what is trying to be
achieved through this amended bill.

We urge you to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1054, and thank you for your
consideration of our testimony.