

Dear Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, My name is Claire Millikin Raymond. I live in Owls Head and teach for the University of Maine system. I write to you here in support of LD 785, a bill that aims to implement some consensus task force recommendations on changes to the Maine Indians Claim Settlement Act. This bill aims to restore to the Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, and Houlton Band of Maliseet opportunities for self-determination that are comparable to those opportunities already enjoyed by other federally recognized tribes. The bill moves towards implementing federal Indian law over state law, in keeping with the United States' general practice. The bill confers a fair and well-researched understanding of what defines Indian Territory and steps back from Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act provisions that allowed the taking of tribal land for public use. The bill recognizes tribal rights (under federal commerce standards) to regulate fishing, hunting, and trapping on Indian Territory. Importantly, it allows tribal law enforcement to have exclusive authority within their territory to keep their citizens safe and keep their communities harmonious. The benefits to the state of Maine in passing this bill are clear. For decades, up to and including a recent Harvard Kennedy School economic study, research has shown that when tribal nations are allowed to exercise self-determination in the context of their own territory the entire state benefits economically. Indeed, the Economic Policy Institute states unequivocally that "Tribal self-determination through self-governance is the only policy that produces positive results." This makes good sense. It is human nature to thrive when we are in control of our own destinies in community. Studies from Stephen Cornell's work in the late nineteen-eighties to Joseph P. Kalt's contemporary research in our decade support our understanding of the benefits of passing LD 785. Thank you for reading my testimony.

Claire Millikin Raymond  
Owls Head  
LD 785

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