

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON MAINE PUBLIC POLICY

Committee on Tribal-State Relations

129 Chesterville Hill Road

Chesterville, ME 04938

March 2, 2021

Testimony on LD 342: An Act to Establish A Permanent Appointment of a Member of the Wabanaki Tribes to the Marine Resources Advisory Council

To The Honorable Senator David Miramant, (chair) and Honorable Representative Jay McCreight (chair), and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources:

I am Anne D. (Andy) Burt, of Edgecomb, retired Environmental Justice Program director for the Maine Council of Churches (MCC). I speak today as a member of the Friends (Quakers) Committee on Maine Public Policy and bring concurring support from the Maine Council of Churches. The Friends Committee is a statewide network of Quakers who are focused on public policy issues in Augusta. For several decades we have addressed issues of concern to the Wabanaki peoples in Maine and worked to improve and strengthen tribal-state relations. **The Friends Committee supports LD 342 and asks your Committee to unanimously vote “ought to pass.” The Maine Council of Churches concurs with FCMPP in supporting LD 342.**

Our committee holds a vision for a cooperative and transparent tribal-state relationship that respects the tribes’ rights to self-determination, that recognizes and affirms their unique cultures and histories, and that guarantees their traditional fishing, hunting and gathering practices on land and waters. To more fully understand the tribes’ ongoing concerns around tribal-state relations, we, in partnership with the Episcopal Diocese’s Committee on Indian Relations, have been meeting with and listening to the chiefs and tribal leaders, as well as to Maine legislative leaders and other elected officials.

We believe the appointment of a Wabanaki tribal member to the Marine Resources Advisory Council would:

- Bring to the table the experiences and indigenous wisdom of Wabanaki people who for millennia have lived in balance with wildlife and stewarded the lands, fresh and marine waters we all benefit from. It is only just that they have a seat where policy about those resources is discussed and acted upon.
- Enrich the Council’s knowledge base by adding a tribal representative, one who may hold degrees in relevant scientific fields while also embracing their cultural knowledge. These would be assets in making policies that have long-term impacts.
- Mutually benefit the tribes and the state, as creating opportunities for engagement and consultation can help to build a more cooperative and trusting relationship between state agencies and the tribes.

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We urge you to diversify the Marine Resources Advisory Council and vote **ought to pass on LD 342**. Thank you for considering our testimony.

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Anne D Burt
Friends (Quakers) Committee on Maine Public Policy/Maine Council of Churches

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