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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

May 31, 2023

Hon Anne Carney, Chair
Hon Matt Moonen, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Room 438, State House
Augusta, Maine 04330

Re LD 1620, *An Act To Amend he Laws Governing the Mi'kmaq Nation*

Dear Sen Carney and Rep Moonen

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Office of the Governor in support of LD 1620, *An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Mi'kmaq Nation*

In January of this year, representatives of the Mi'kmaq Nation contacted the Attorney General's Office and the Governor's Office to request a meeting to discuss the drafting of this legislation. Since that initial meeting, the parties have met no less often than every two weeks to share and review ideas, concerns, drafts, and redlines of drafts. Without exception, these conversations have been respectful, informative, and constructive. I would like to thank the Mi'kmaq Nation for initiating this process, and all of the participants for the time and effort they put into it.

The legislative language you have been presented with is the product of that effort. Generally, the intent of the bill is to expand the current rights and authority of the Mi'kmaq Nation to align with corresponding rights and authority of the Passamaquoddy Tribe and Penobscot Nation under the *Maine Implementing Act*, 30 M R S §§ 6201 *et seq* (MIA). The legislation addresses powers of self-government, including control over internal tribal matters, ordinance authority, regulatory authority over natural resources, sustenance fishing rights, and court jurisdiction, among other things. In no case does the bill provide the Mi'kmaq Nation with powers and authority in Mi'kmaq Nation Trust Land that go beyond those powers and authority now enjoyed by the Passamaquoddy Tribe in Passamaquoddy Territory under MIA.



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As a matter of policy, we believe it is fair and appropriate that the Mi'kmaq Nation's powers of self-governance be expanded as provided for in this legislation. Thank you for your consideration, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Gerald D. Reid
Chief Legal Counsel



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