



# **Permanent Commission RACIAL, INDIGENOUS & TRIBAL POPULATIONS**

## **LD14 “An Act to Provide Indigenous Peoples Free Access to State Parks”**

**March 11, 2025**

Senator Talbot Ross , Representative Pluecker, and Honorable Members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee.

My name is Rae Sage, and I am the Policy Coordinator for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations. The Permanent Commission’s role is to examine racial disparities across all systems and advise Maine State Government on ways to improve the status and outcomes of historically disadvantaged racial, Indigenous, and tribal populations.

The Policy Committee of the Permanent Commission supports LD14 as it supports legislation that advances Wabanaki Self Determination. By eliminating cost barriers related to accessing state-held parks, historic sites, camping areas or beaches-LD14 gives the state an opportunity to respect the tribes in their relationship to the lands they've called home for thousands of years, aiding in the slow process of healing generations of trauma directly connected to colonization and the loss of access to their native lands.

Over the last several months the Permanent Commission has partnered with Wabanaki REACH to offer state employees and legislators a series of trainings illuminating the history of Wabanaki people. These trainings showcase the displacement of Wabanaki people over time and the resulting cultural, economic, and identity loss associated.

Time and time again, I watched as these trainings caused strong emotions from participants faced with the depths of harms perpetrated against Wabanaki people, often for the first time. I share this to convey

that it is our responsibility as state agencies and staff to not only know and acknowledge these truths but to ensure this understanding is reflected in our decision making on the policy level.

The Permanent Commission respectfully encourages the passing of LD14 as a vital step towards truth and collective healing. Thank You.