Maine Conservation Voters
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Testimony of Maine Conservation Voters
In Support of LD 14
"An Act to Provide Indigenous Peoples Free Access to State Parks"
Before the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
February 11, 2025

Good day, Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee. Maine Conservation Voters (MCV) is testifying to express enthusiastic support for LD 14 and commend its sponsor, Senator Craig Hickman, for introducing this bill. MCV is a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy.

LD 14 would allow members of Maine's federally recognized Indian Tribes free admission to state owned parks, historic sites, camping areas and beaches. MCV believes that this bill is an important step in recognizing the inherent rights of Wabanaki people to be reunited with homelands that their ancestors have stewarded for over 12,000 years. These lands and waters include sites sacred to the Wabanaki, where they practiced traditional ceremonies for generations until access was restricted by state-imposed fees. Enactment of LD 14 will remove this barrier to access for current and future generations of Wabanaki.

All of us who call Maine home benefit from the great care that Wabanaki people have given to lands and waters for millennia. They have a long and deep history of living in close relationship with the land and have distinct and uniquely valuable knowledge about these places. We will all benefit when the Wabanaki have free access to public spaces as they further restore their relationship with lands and waters. LD 14 is a small but key step toward righting historic wrongs and will build good will between the state and the Wabanaki Nations. MCV urges the Committee to vote ought to pass on this bill.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Melville
Board President, Maine Conservation Voters