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Testimony of Rep. Jennifer Poirier introducing
LD 813, "An Act Regarding State Recognition of Native American Tribes"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

March 12, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

I am Jennifer Poirier, proud representative of House District 70, Skowhegan. I stand before you today to present LD 813, An Act Regarding State Recognition of Native American Tribes.

For thirteen years, one tribe has come before this Legislature, pleading for recognition—only to be denied, time and again. The reasons vary: "The timing isn't right." "They'll compete for funding." "We have no process for this."

LD 813 creates that process. It establishes clear criteria—lineage documentation, government structure, and formal review—ensuring a fair and transparent path to state recognition.

It saddens me that I must submit this bill again. The Kineo Tribe seeks no state funding, no land, no jurisdictional claims—only acknowledgment of who they are. Their history in Maine predates all of us. Why is it so difficult to recognize them?

I hope this bill becomes unnecessary. LD 812, also before you, would grant recognition to the Kineo Tribe and resolve this issue once and for all. I urge you to act—not based on the opinions of currently recognized tribes, but with empathy for the Kineo people. Imagine returning year after year, pleading simply to be seen.

Recognize the Kineo Tribe, or at the very least, provide them a path forward.

Thank you for your time. I welcome any questions.

Jennifer Poirier
State Representative

District 70 Skowhegan