



**Testimony of Sean Mahoney before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
In support of LD 395 – An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task
Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, I am the vice-president and senior counsel of the Conservation Law Foundation. This testimony is in support of LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations.

CLF, founded in 1966, is a public interest advocacy group that works to solve the environmental challenges that threaten the people, natural resources and communities in Maine and across New England. In Maine for almost four decades, CLF is a member-supported organization that has worked to ensure that laws and policies are developed, implemented and enforced in a just and inclusive way that protect and restore our natural resources, are good for Maine's economy and environment, and address the climate crisis in a manner that recognizes its fierce urgency.

The premise of LD 395 is relatively simple. It would modernize the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement so that the Wabanaki Nations can benefit from most of the existing and future federal laws that apply to the other 570 federally recognized tribes in our country.

Not being on the same footing as those other 570 federally recognized tribes has real consequences. For example, not having access to federal legislation and programs enacted under the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, has hindered the Wabanaki Nations' ability to tap into grants and funding for equipment, training and infrastructure, which has an impact not just on the health and safety of the Wabanaki Nations but also on surrounding communities.

Coupled with LD 785, this Committee, this Legislature and this Administration have the rare opportunity to make right a past wrong. In placing the Wabanaki Nations on the same footing as other federally recognized tribes, LD 395 will not only right those past wrongs but will benefit Maine broadly – prosperous and healthy Wabanaki communities and business are good for those surrounding communities and the State as a whole.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.