



Committee on Judiciary
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

February 19, 2026

RE: LD 395, *An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations*

Dear Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Anthony Erwin and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Since 1843, Maine Audubon has worked to conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat by engaging people in education, conservation, and action. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, we thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 395, *An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations*.

Wabanaki people have lived in this place we now call Maine for millenia with an understanding of and connection to natural resources far deeper than ours today. Their stewardship was interrupted by the colonization of these lands which resulted in the Wabanaki Nations losing 98% of their population and access to most of the lands, waters, and wildlife that they have lived in relationship with for thousands of years. Signed in 1980, the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act has kept the Wabanaki Nations from benefiting from more than 150 federal laws, including laws that would have helped foster job creation, economic development, health care access, and environmental protection. It is past time to help restore the inherent power and rights of the Wabanaki Nations to make decisions that affect their lands, waters, and communities. LD 395 would help accomplish that.

LD 395 would modernize the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act so that the Wabanaki Nations can benefit from existing and future federal laws that apply to the other 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States. Importantly this would include both the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act, allowing the Wabanaki Nations to finally assume primary regulatory authority for federal environmental programs on their lands.

Above all else, Maine Audubon strives to engage people in the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat. We feel that the ability to engage in that important work is significantly weakened if people are disempowered, marginalized, or disenfranchised. Maine Audubon supports LD 395 because it protects and improves the relationship the Wabanaki Nations have with their lands, waters, and wildlife. We

strongly encourage this Committee to vote in support of this crucially important bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Anthony Erwin

Policy Advocate