

I am writing in support of LD 785 and sovereignty for Maine's Indigenous Tribes and to urge your committee to vote 'ought to pass.' For 40 years, Maine has moved away from the federal government's approach to Native American sovereignty by blocking Indigenous self-determination. Tribal sovereignty is an immediate and necessary need both for our Indigenous peoples and for the climate and the environment that affect all of us. The Tribes are asking only to be treated like the other 570 federally recognized Tribes across the United States. Tribal communities throughout Maine are disproportionately affected by problems such as climate change, environmental pollution, and loss of traditional lands. Because science too often has ignored or exacerbated racial inequities, it must now be used to right those wrongs. For these reasons, I urge this committee to vote "ought to pass" on LD 785, An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act.

Beverly Richards-Smith

Hancock, Maine