

I am writing in support of LD 785 and sovereignty for the Indigenous tribes in Maine, and I ask that your committee vote ought to pass. For 40 years, Maine has moved in the opposite direction from that of federal support for Indigenous self-determination. The need for sovereignty for the tribes in Maine is immediate and necessary. The tribes are asking to be treated like the other 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States. Tribal communities across Maine are disproportionately affected by problems such as climate change, environmental pollution, and loss of traditional lands. There's another point to consider. No one in our state and nation is better than its indigenous people when it comes to protecting the environment on which we all depend. The best way to help them do the job is to grant them full tribal sovereignty. Because science has too often ignored or worsened racial inequities, it must now 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.

John Raby

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