

This bill is a very important one for our Wabanaki neighbors and for all of us who care about fairness. I am writing in support of LD 785 and sovereignty for the Indigenous tribes in Maine, and I urge you and your committee to vote 'ought to pass'. If any questions of environmental regulation come to your mind as reasons to oppose this bill, please think again. We have so much to learn about stewardship of the Earth's resources.....and should be putting heavy regulations on big business pollution without waiting for our Native wisdom leaders to recommend it. 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. Because science has too often 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.

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