



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

February 19, 2026

RE: LD 785, *An Act to Enact Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act*

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 785, *An Act to Enact Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act*.

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 and for more than 40 years, the Wabanaki Nations have endured a different, more restrictive status than all 570 other federally-recognized tribes throughout the United States. LD 785 would help rectify these wrongs. This bill is designed to restore many of the rights to self-determination that the Wabanaki Nations have not benefited from. Importantly it recognizes the exclusive authority to regulate fishing, hunting, trapping, and other natural resources on Wabanaki lands.

Maine Audubon strives to engage people in the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat. Wabanaki people have been protecting the environment and maintaining sustainable ecological practices for millenia, long before European settlement of Maine. They will continue to do so, and enacting the remaining recommendations of the 2019 Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act will allow for the Wabanaki Nations to exercise their rightful authority



over tribal lands, in line with the other 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States. We strongly encourage this Committee to vote in support of this crucially important bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anthony Erwin".

Anthony Erwin

Policy Advocate