



MOFGA Testimony In Support Of  
LD 25 - *An Act to Provide Indigenous Peoples Free Access to State Parks*  
January 25, 2023

Good morning Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. My name is Heather Spalding and I am deputy director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA). MOFGA is creating a food system that is healthy and fair for all of us. Through education, training and advocacy, we are helping farmers thrive, making more local, organic food available and building sustainable communities.

I am speaking today in support of LD 25 - *An Act to Provide Indigenous Peoples Free Access to State Parks*. This bill provides that a member of a federally recognized Indian nation, tribe or band is not required to pay a fee for admission to or use of any state-owned park or historic site managed by the State

What is now Maine has supported Wabanaki people and a system of hunting, fishing, and gathering grounds through time immemorial. Before European colonization, these grounds were accessible by the Wabanaki for their enjoyment. Offering free admission to state parks for indigenous people is a step forward to correct the many injustices that indigenous people have suffered.

MOFGA is committed to working towards Wabanaki prosperity, tribal sovereignty and food sovereignty. Our mission is to work for a fair and healthy food system for all of us, and we recognize that Wabanaki food sovereignty is a critical part of accomplishing this mission. We also recognize the interdependence of all aspects of a healthy food system, and the importance of Wabanaki knowledge, stewardship and leadership in creating a regenerative food system that supports all of us.

Though this bill doesn't touch on food sovereignty, I would like to suggest that consideration be given to indigenous people's access to hunting, fishing and gathering in ways that can mesh with the public's enjoyment and safe recreation in the state's park system. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation.

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*The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) started in 1971 and is the oldest and largest state organic organization in the country. We're a broad-based community that educates about and advocates for organic agriculture, illuminating its interdependence with a healthy environment, local food production, and thriving communities. We have 15,000 members, we certify more than 500 organic farms and processing facilities representing \$90 million in sales, and we are working hard to provide training and create opportunities for Maine's next generation of farmers. Each of these farmers is a Maine businessperson for whom economic health and environmental health are interdependent. While MOFGA envisions a future of healthy ecosystems,*



*communities, people and economies sustained by the practices of organic agriculture, we attribute our success to collaboration and outreach to growers across the management spectrum.*