

Barry Dana  
Penobscot Nation  
LD 294

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Pluecker and members of the committee  
As a member of the Penobscot Nation, its former Chief and keeper of traditional Penobscot knowledge and traditions I address this forum with my thoughts in support of the proposed bill.

For starters allow me to step back in time a bit, like lets say 13,000 years. It was then my Penobscot ancestors stood gazing up at what they saw as the greatest mountain and called it, Katahdin.. Since this time the Penobscot people have lived in its shadow. and were the governing authority all this time. We have honored the mountain in ceremony.

Our language tells of a time when we took to the top of Ktahdin to escape the great flood. The snake finally appeared as a messenger to let the people know the waters had receded. Our language and legends tell us of our deep connection to the mountain, its waters and creatures. .

Many have seen Ktahdin Stream. Not as many have seen where this stream comes directly out of the side of the mountain. This iconic well visited stream flows directly into the Penobscot's river. All the rains and waters that flow from the mountain make up the Penobscot's river shed. My people have travelled these waters since our arrival.

I grew up on the Penobscot and sat with Penobscot elders and listened to their stories of the mountain and about our ceremonies held there. Living in a place for 13,000 years gave us, the Penobscot tribe/nation the authority to manage this region and all its creatures great and small.. This stewardship of being directly connected to the mountain and its waters is native wisdom.

As a young adult I knew it was my responsibility to visit the mountain to also seek knowledge and direction. My findings while there lead me to see the need to revive our ancient connection that had been severed due to colonization . I then started what is now known as the K100. Where the Penobscot people and our invited Wabanaki relatives join us in a 100 mile journey to Ktahdin. We run, walk, hike , bike and or canoe from our little home reservation to the base of Ktahdin This past year was our 41st journey.

Having reconnected to the mountain it was time to approach the park to secure our rights to continue our annual ceremony. Wanting to establish a relationship with the park, my uncle Butch Phillips, also a member of the Penobscot Nation and I appeared before the PSP Authority some decades ago. We offered our thoughts on our people's need to be able to continue our ceremonies at the mountain and have these events be recognized by the park authority. The authority established a working committee composed of its director , my uncle and myself.. We walked the park lands and discussed our needs and worked out an agreement. This has been a very good relationship with both parties working in good faith for many years.

This deep connection to the mountain, its waters and now even the park has led me to seek a more concrete relationship with the park authority. As Penobscot we care about the management and decisions as much as the people who created the park. To be given the appropriate seat to have a meaningful voice is to create a seat for a native person on the park authority. As Penobscots we had the authority here for 13,000 years and we proved what excellent management can be. I am asking for the state through its leadership here today to join with the native people working as partners each representing our own governments in the management of a true treasure we all deeply honor. .ni alec...thank you