

TO: Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

FROM: Janet Hough, 401 S Edmunds Rd, Edmunds Twp, ME 04828
Member, Friends (Quaker) Committee on Maine Public Policy (FCMPP)

RE: LD294--AN ACT TO INCLUDE A TRIBAL MEMBER ON THE BAXTER STATE PARK AUTHORITY

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Janet Hough and I am speaking on behalf of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy--a statewide organization of Quaker advocates—to urge a vote in favor of LD 294. In recent years FCMPP has focused almost solely on being informed allies of the Tribes in Maine in addressing areas of concern to them and in strengthening Tribal-state relations. We do so in recognition of the deep moral and ethical issues involved in Maine's current relationship to the Wabanaki peoples.

The Baxter State Park Authority now has three designated state officials and is supplemented by four voluntary advisory committees with a total membership of 47. Apparently not a single Wabanaki individual is now a serving member. LD 294 would remedy this exclusion.

The Wabanaki have been the peoples of this land for untold generations. Their long legacy and cumulative wisdom in caring for the natural environment across the current state of Maine deserves to be recognized and drawn upon in the management of Baxter State Park. Many of the Indigenous tribes in this region revered Mount Katahdin as their most sacred site and a place of pilgrimage and prayer. They still do.

In light of their age-old role as trustees of this land and the natural world long before European settlers appeared on these shores, it is appropriate to have a Wabanaki citizen join fully in the current management process. Adding a Wabanaki member to the Park Authority would bring valuable information and seasoned perspectives to the shared oversight and ongoing protection of Katahdin and the larger Park area.

Consistent with our Quaker commitment to seek just treatment and full recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples, we urge a positive vote to advance LD 294 toward full passage in the current legislative session. Thank you.

Janet Hough
Friends (Quaker) Committee on Maine Public Policy
LD 294

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