

Theodore Kanellakis
Camdenwith
LD 294

To Members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee at their Public Hearing on Feb. 13, 2023 I submit the following.

My name is Theodore Kanellakis. I am a resident of Camden Maine. I wish to submit this written testimony to members of the 131st Legislature for their action in voting in support of LD 294, an Act to add one member of one of the Federally recognized Tribal Nations of Maine, aka Wabanaki, as agreed to by those nations to serve as one of the Authority in Control of Baxter State Park, which includes Mount Katahdin, viewed as sacred to Indigenous peoples.

I will not go into the past actions or inactions relating to Tribal participation in Maine's public, private or governmental affairs of land ownership or usage, nor my views on ethical practices by Maine's governing bodies relating to the Tribes and their territories.

I just wish to point out that we should all be in agreement that a healthier Maine should include a respectful recognition and substantially active involvement and participation of our Wabanaki tribal neighbors when considering matters of land and water usage, planning, and controls, as they have been responsible and dedicated stewards of these ancestrally managed territories for hundreds of centuries before non Indigenous peoples ever came to live here.

It needs to be understood that our Indigenous neighbors' world view centers on respect for kinship and respectful recognition and treatment of all life forms including especially, kinship and sharing with all human beings with humble gratitude for the whole created order and gifts given us.

To quote the retired Episcopal Bishop of Alaska and of Choctaw Ancestral Lineage, the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston in one of his recent daily meditations as an example: 02/12/23, Sunday. "We have everything we need, when we have one another. Community is not about numbers, but about relationships. Along with their skills and their ideas, people bring something even more important to one another. They bring themselves. The commitment of their heart. Our unity is about acceptance and it is about awareness. Self-awareness: the kind that tells us we can be so different, because we are so much the same.

I will not attempt to add anything to that wisdom shared with us.

I hope you will vote for passage of this important Bill in the spirit of gratitude for your responsibilities as representatives of the people and wellbeing of future generations who will inhabit this place we love and are blessed to reside.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted
Theodore Kanellakis, Camden Maine