

## Testimony in Support of LD 2070, An Act to Prohibit Landfill Expansion into Wetlands

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Sage Phillips, I am a proud citizen of the Penobscot Nation and the Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator for the Wabanaki Alliance. I am writing in strong support of LD 2070, An Act to Prohibit Landfill Expansion into Wetlands and thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee.

As a young tribal citizen I have been raised to understand that our sacred Penobscot River is what gives our people life—it is through the sustenance that the river has graciously provided us with that we remain here today. As a thanks to the gifts and care that we receive from our sacred waters we hold the utmost responsibility as the next generation to care for the river in return.

The Penobscot River sits adjacent to the Juniper Ridge Landfill in Old Town on the homelands of the Penobscot Nation. As it currently stands, the landfill already poses threats to the wellbeing of our tribal citizens and surrounding communities through its pollution to the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the land in which our sustenance for life grows. LD 2070 would be a step forward to ensure that the landfill expansion proposal does not succeed at the cost of the health, well-being, and future of the Penobscot Nation.

Today, I should be able to harvest fish from our river to nourish my body as my ancestors once did. Far too often we see Native Nations across the globe speaking out against environmental injustices that are a threat to their homelands and health. Unfortunately, the Juniper Ridge Landfill has become that threat for the Penobscot Nation. We have seen the Wabanaki Nations work with the State of Maine and other entities to achieve unprecedented outcomes that are beneficial to all, such as the historic Penobscot River Restoration and I am hopeful to see such collaborations take place again where we all have a seat at the table.

I thank my ancestors, elders, and tribal leaders who have come before me that have fought since time immemorial to steward and protect our homelands which has evolved over time into defending them as well. In our culture we operate with the mindset of seventh-generation thinking: the decisions that we make today will impact the next seven generations that follow in our footsteps. As such, I'd like to urge the Committee to help us honor those who *have* and the next generation who *will* protect our homelands now called Maine and join the Penobscot Nation and partners to support LD 2070.