



**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SPEAKER'S OFFICE
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1300**

**RYAN M. FECTEAU
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE**

**Testimony of Speaker Ryan Fecteau
In Support of L.D. 1626**

**“An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian
Claims Settlement”
Tuesday, May 4, 2021**

Senator Carney, Representative Harnett, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Judiciary, my name is Ryan Fecteau and I represent part of my hometown of Biddeford. I also have the distinct honor of serving as the Speaker of the Maine House. Today I ask for your support of *L.D. 1626 - An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement*. Supporting this bill, I stand in solidarity with the Wabanaki tribes. The State of Maine should recognize the Wabanaki tribes' inherent sovereignty.

This is not an instance of our state granting the tribes' rights as a sovereign government. It is about restoring their rights. They deserve the rights, powers, duties, and privileges similar to those guaranteed to the other 570 federally recognized tribes located within the United States. For too long, this body has hindered the path toward rightful sovereignty.

The Wabanaki tribes are not asking for special privileges. They are asking for fairness, equity, and to be treated like the other federally recognized tribes across the country. Their sovereign rights should never have been revoked and urgently need to be restored.

As legislators, it is our duty to reflect on our shared history and recognize opportunities to right past wrongs. The bill before you would restore the Wabanaki tribes' ability to manage their own lands, waters and resources, and acknowledge their inherent right to self-determination, which sovereign nations deserve.

This body has an opportunity here to correct a longstanding injustice. Please vote 'Ought To Pass' on L.D. 1626 and put this Legislature on the right side of history.