

Sarah Marx
Orono
LD 1626

Dear Senator Carney, Rep. Harnett and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing in support of LD1626 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act. I grew up in Maine and returned to live here 12 years ago. In the intervening years I lived in several other states with much more peaceful and productive relationships between state governments and native tribes.

As it currently stands, the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act has created years of acrimony and injustice and a waste of taxpayer money on unnecessary legal battles. Maine tribes have a right to be treated like all other federally recognized tribes. They have a right to self-governance and to jurisdiction over their own land and water. They have a right to the full 300,000 acres of trust land the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act promised they would be allowed to purchase. They have a right to benefit from the same federal laws that all other tribal nations have been able to access for the last 40 years.

I am a non-native person living on the Penobscot River, with many family members who hunt and fish, and I would choose the Penobscot Nation to steward this land, this water and these resources any day. My Penobscot neighbors have done a far better job than any other governmental entity in tracking pollution in the Penobscot River, making that data available to citizens like me, and sharing their lands for hunting and fishing with all Mainers. They have been the best kind of neighbors and it is time that the state of Maine behaved the same.

A bi-partisan task force came up with the recommendations in LD1626 – Republicans and Democrats acting together. It is not a party issue. It is time to stop delaying and enact what we all know to be fair and right. Please vote in favor of LD1626 to return self-government to the tribes in Maine and allow us all to move forward together.

Sincerely,
Sarah Marx
4 Peters St.
Orono, ME 04473