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LD 813

I am a resident of Portland and supporter of efforts of the Wabanaki to obtain federal recognition of its tribal sovereignty. LD813 is counter to these efforts so I strongly urge the Committee to vote ought NOT to pass.

Specifically, LD813 is an attempt to circumvent existing federal processes for recognition of Indigenous Nations and would bring harm, not benefit, to the Wabanaki living and working in Maine:

- 1) States do not have the authority to designate who counts as a tribal nation.
- 2) The Wabanaki Nations have been engaged in a very public effort to repair their relationships with the State of Maine, and restore the recognition of their right to self-determination. If LD813 passes, it sets a precedent that groups of people in Maine can create tribes, complicating and setting back the good work already done towards amending the Settlement Acts, because they would also have to account for new groups in an already strained situation.
- 3) Indigenous Nations who are federally recognized have a unique status with protection, access to laws and resources, and benefits with the federal government. A state recognition process muddies the waters of what is generally understood as a Nation, and it has the potential to threaten the gains that the Wabanaki Nations have worked hard to achieve in regards to our rights and privileges in the federal relationship.
- 4) The process set forth in LD 813 would also seem to contradict LD 812. LD 812 establishes tribal status for the St. John Kineo band, but LD 813 would establish its status through a committee appointed by the Governor. Neither of these processes is anywhere close to the high standard set by the federal government, which is the bar that the Wabanaki Nations have met.