

Testimony Supporting LD 958 An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Anne D. (Andy) Burt. I live in Edgecomb, Maine. I am here to **support LD 958 – An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands.**

For nearly two decades I have presented testimony before this committee on legislation that would right the many injustices imposed by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act. I have done so as a concerned Maine citizen and as a member of the Friends (Quaker) Committee on Maine Public Policy, a faith-based organization that has for decades focused on improving state and tribal relations. Today I give testimony as an individual.

The **bipartisan** legislation before you, LD 958, would amend the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act and the 2023 Mi'kmaq Nation Restoration Act, by **removing language that gives the state eminent domain power to seize Wabanaki land for public use *without consultation*.** Taking tribal land without consultation is contrary to federal law that protects most tribal nations across the US from state-level eminent domain. (The 1980 Settlement Acts unjustly excluded Wabanaki Nations from these federal protections.)

By enacting LD 958 you can take a step towards justice and respect for Wabanaki Nations, who have inherent power to govern their own territories. LD 958 guarantees that a **consultation process resulting in a mutual agreement between the state and the Wabanaki Nations** must take place before any Wabanaki lands are taken by state eminent domain. This process not only encourages cooperation and collaboration rather than conflict and litigation, but, I believe, would also help to build trust in state-tribal relationships in other areas of decision-making that impact the lives and welfare of all Maine people and Wabanaki citizens.

I urge you to vote **unanimously OUGHT TO PASS on LD 958.**

Respectfully submitted

Anne D Burt
Edgecomb
LD 958

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