

Beth Clifford
Perry
LD 958

To the Honorable Committee Chairs: Sen. Carney and Rep. Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I'm submitting this written testimony in support of LD 958. Passage of this bill would:

- Restore fairness and respect Wabanaki Nations' sovereignty over their own lands. This is a protection already afforded to almost all other federally recognized tribes.
- Prohibit the taking of tribal land without consultation. This is against federal policy. Federal law protects most tribal nations from state-level eminent domain, but the 1980 Settlement Acts have resulted in the Wabanaki Nations in Maine being unfairly excluded from these federal protections.
- End the harm of eminent domain on Wabanaki lands. Maine Route 190, which cuts through the heart of the Passamaquoddy Reservation at Sipayik, was taken by eminent domain in 1925—a decision made without tribal input. LD 958 would ensure that no such action happens again without tribal consultation.
- Encourage collaboration, not conflict. This legislation is a protective measure to guarantee consultation and mutual agreement before any action is taken on tribal lands. It ensures the tribes have a voice.

LD 958 a step towards justice and fairness. LD 958 restores a fundamental principle that the Wabanaki Nations are sovereign governments with inherent power to regulate their territories. I urge you all to support this bill. Maine's recognition of the Wabanaki Nations' sovereignty is long overdue.