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Searsmont
LD 958

I am a concerned citizen of Waldo County, Maine and urge you to vote YES on LD 958, sponsored by Republican Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham and has bipartisan support.

Taking tribal land without consulting Tribes 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. LD 958 seeks to amend this challenge.

I personally have been impacted by eminent domain as a non-Wabanaki U.S. citizen and can empathize with the Wabanaki Nations around land seizure. In Pennsylvania, the my neighbor's lands were taken through eminent domain to build infrastructure for natural gas fracturing sites, service roads for the sites, and my hometown has a history of eminent domain taking people's lands for coal mining. Forests were cut down, mountain tops were exploded, and water was polluted all without the input of local residents.

Eminent domain without consultation of Wabanaki Nations does not encourage community collaboration or prioritize the voices, input and needs of local communities. LD 958 encourages collaboration between Wabanaki and non-Native Maine communities, which is necessary and the right thing to do as we all love and share the lands of this beautiful place.

History shows the harm of eminent domain on Wabanaki lands. Maine Route 190 cuts through the middle of the Passamaquoddy Reservation at Sipayik and 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.

This bipartisan legislation LD 958 restores fairness and respects the fundamental principle that the Wabanaki Nations are sovereign governments with inherent power to regulate their territories.

I urge you to vote YES on LD 958!