

LD 958 Testimony to Maine Legislature Judiciary Committee
Elizabeth Schultz
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting testimony to express my strong support for LD 958, An Act to Prohibit Eminent Domain on Tribal Lands. I am a retired educator and have been a member of the Wabanaki Ally Team at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Portland for the past four years.

This legislation corrects an inequity that has persisted since the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act. This inequity subjects the Wabanaki to eminent domain powers that do not apply to other federally recognized tribes. Federal law prohibits state-level eminent domain, yet the Wabanaki are excluded from these federal protections due to the unjust provisions of the 1980 Settlement Act.

It's time to rectify this wrong. The tribes deserve a voice. The tribes deserve fairness. The tribes deserve a seat at the table when critical decisions are made about their sacred land. It's time to ensure that events as such the construction of Maine Routh 190 through the Passamaquoddy Reservation at Sipayik in 1925 never happen again. Eminent domain actions promote disruption and distrust and must be avoided as Maine moves in the direction of more responsive and respectful relationships with the Wabanaki.

I urge the committee to support LD 958, voting to Ought to Pass, and uphold the principle that no government has the power to take Indigenous land without consent. This legislation provides a framework for collaboration, respectful engagement, and productive problem solving. Please uphold sovereignty and respect for tribal rights by supporting this critical legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth (Beth) Schultz
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