

Hannah Slattery
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LD 958

Dear Committee Members,

I write to express my strong support for LD 958: Prohibit Eminent Domain on Wabanaki Land. This essential legislation restores fairness and respects the sovereignty of the Wabanaki Nations, which include the Mi'kmaq Nation, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Penobscot Nation, and the Passamaquoddy Tribes at Motahkomikuk and Sipayik. These tribes deserve protections already afforded to nearly all other federally recognized tribes in the United States.

LD 958 addresses a long-standing injustice by removing the state of Maine's authority to seize tribal lands through eminent domain. The 1980 Settlement Acts excluded the Wabanaki Nations from federal protections that prevent state-level eminent domain, leaving them uniquely vulnerable to land seizures. This bill corrects that inequity and ensures that tribal lands are safeguarded.

The harm caused by eminent domain on Wabanaki lands is evident in history. In 1925, Maine Route 190 was constructed through the heart of the Passamaquoddy Reservation at Sipayik without tribal input. LD 958 would prevent such unilateral actions in the future and ensure that tribal governments are included in decisions affecting their lands.

This legislation encourages collaboration between the state and tribal leaders, fostering mutual respect and cooperation rather than conflict. It guarantees that tribal governments have a voice in matters involving their territories, reinforcing their sovereignty and rightful role in such discussions.

At its core, LD 958 is about justice and equity. The Wabanaki Nations should not be treated differently from other federally recognized tribes. By passing this bill, Maine can take an important step toward correcting historical wrongs and building a more respectful relationship with the Wabanaki Nations.

I urge you to support LD 958 to protect tribal sovereignty and ensure fairness for the Mi'kmaq Nation, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Penobscot Nation, and Passamaquoddy Tribes at Motahkomikuk and Sipayik. Thank you for your attention to this vital matter.

Hannah Slattery