

To the Honorable Members of the Maine Legislature,

My name is Sarah Cowperthwaite, and I am writing in strong support of LD 395, *An Act to Restore Access to Native Lands Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nation*. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill and to stand on the right side of history.

For centuries, the Wabanaki Nation has stewarded the lands and waters of what we now call Maine with care, restraint, and deep ecological knowledge. Yet through colonization, broken treaties, and unjust laws, Indigenous people were systematically stripped of access to their ancestral lands—lands that are central not only to their history, but to their culture, identity, and survival. My family has been in Maine since the early 1700's, and while that makes me a Mainer with deep ties to the state, it in no way should entitle me or others like me to deter the true Mainers from access to their land.

LD 395 is a meaningful step toward addressing these long-standing injustices. Restoring access to native lands is not about special treatment; it is about fairness, dignity, and honoring obligations that were never rightfully extinguished. It acknowledges that reconciliation requires action, not just words.

This legislation also benefits all Maine people. When the Wabanaki Nation is empowered to steward land according to traditional knowledge systems, we see improved environmental health, stronger communities, and a more honest relationship with our shared past. Respecting Indigenous sovereignty and access to land strengthens Maine's moral, cultural, and ecological future.

History will remember how we responded when given the opportunity to correct an injustice. I ask you to support LD 395, to listen to the voices of the Wabanaki people, and to choose courage over convenience. Doing so affirms that Maine is committed to justice, truth, and a more equitable future.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully,

Sarah Cowperthwaite
Brunswick, Maine