

Jeremy Cluchey
Bowdoinham
LD 785

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee,
My name is Jeremy Cluchey. I appreciate having the opportunity to submit testimony
in support of LD 785.

The more I have learned about the history of colonialism in Maine, the more I have
come to understand how essential it is that we recognize Wabanaki sovereignty. Full
recognition of Wabanaki sovereignty is critical to the continuance of longstanding
Wabanaki decision-making and land care traditions that improve the wellbeing of
people, lands, and waters.

Currently, Wabanaki Tribal governments are made to operate as quasi-municipalities
when it comes to acquiring new trust lands, tending to existing Tribal lands, and
furthering economic development. The current law imposes a barrier on full
expression of Wabanaki sovereignty that hinders projects, resources, and programs
that would otherwise benefit land, water, and people. It also adds a barrier to
Wabanaki inclusion in federal legislation, blocking Wabanaki access to federal policy
and funding that might otherwise support land care and communities. Wabanaki
Nations are alone among US federally-recognized Tribes in having to navigate this
additional layer of state control.

In truth, Wabanaki sovereignty exists whether we recognize it or not. Please take this
opportunity to right an historic inequity and recognize the inherent sovereignty of the
Wabanaki.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our state.

Jeremy Cluchey
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