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## **Testimony in Support of LD 395 & LD 785**

**Dana Colihan, Co-Executive Director | February 18th, 2026**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Dana Colihan, I am Co-Executive Director of Slingshot. I am testifying in support of LD 395 and LD 785. Slingshot is an environmental health and justice organization, working alongside communities most impacted by environmental threats to take aim at polluters and build community power.

In Maine's history, and to this day, Indigenous communities bear the burden of environmental pollution on their own lands. Right now, the Penobscot Nation is opposing the expansion of the state owned Juniper Ridge Landfill. The toxic leachate from the landfill discharges into the Penobscot River, contaminating waters that tribal members have used for fishing for thousands of years. This pollution threatens public and environmental health for all Mainers. But for Indigenous communities, that harm is exacerbated when it occurs on the sacred lands that they have stewarded and protected for generations.

The Wabanaki Nations have experienced continued injustice, environmentally and beyond. The state must take action to repair the harm it has caused and respect tribal sovereignty. Passing LD 395 and LD 785 is a vital step in this direction. Currently, tribal sovereignty is undermined by the outdated 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA), blocking access to federal policies and benefits.

It is shameful that the state of Maine has for so long maintained the exclusionary language in MICSA, inhibiting the economic growth and self-determination of the Wabanaki Nations. These acts will entitle the Wabanaki Nations' to the benefits of at least 151 federal laws, including the self-determination policies that have grown tribal income outside of Maine by 61% since 1989.

This is an opportunity for the Judiciary Committee and state of Maine to do the right thing, rectify decades of harmful policy, and support tribal sovereignty. In turn, the state will benefit from the tribal economic activity that will bring thousands of jobs to rural communities in Maine.

I urge the committee to listen to their constituents and listen to the Wabanaki Nations. Respect tribal sovereignty. Pass LD 395 and LD 785. Thank you.