



Georges River Land Trust

120 Tillson Ave, Suite 102

Rockland, ME 04841

Testimony In Support of LD 785 and LD 395

Dear community,

For nearly 40 years, Georges River Land Trust has conserved and cared for the lands and waters of what we know today as the St. George River watershed. We recognize, however, that we are not the original stewards of this place and that we work and live on the unceded homelands of the Wabanaki peoples. Over the past year, we have dedicated time to relearning both the history and the present context of our region. We have much to learn from Wabanaki stewardship and conservation practices. We believe that by broadening Wabanaki land ownership and undoing barriers to Wabanaki sovereignty, the environment will benefit greatly.

We support the passing of LD 785 and LD 395. In 1980, the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Acts excluded the Wabanaki Nations in Maine from federal laws which benefit over 570 other federally recognized tribes in the United States. As a result of this harmful legislation, according to [a 2019 report by the Suffolk University Law School](#), Wabanaki tribes in Maine have been ineligible to receive the benefits from over 150 federally enacted laws in the past 40 years related to housing, community development, and public health.

The passing of LD 785 and LD 395 would support Wabanaki self-determination, including rights to regulate hunting, fishing, natural resources, and land use on tribal lands. We hope to see these rights restored through the enactment of these bills.

Sincerely,

Georges River Land Trust Staff and Board

Maeve Cosgrove
Georges River Land Trust
LD 785

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