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LD 395

I am writing in support of LD 395 because it will position the Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Nations on equal footing with the other 574 Federally recognized Tribes in the United States. The 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act need modernizing in order to include the Mi'kmaq Nation and to remove the barriers for Wabanakis to participate in economic development efforts as outlined in the 2022 Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.

Additionally, LD 395 will rectify legal loopholes created because the 1980 Settlement Act does not recognize the Federal to Federal relationship between Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Nations and the United States. This allowed misjustices and created harms in Wabanaki communities around laws such as The Stafford Act, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA), Environmental Protection Laws.

The state of Maine needs to address these wrongs, bolster Maine's economic future, address our state's treaty obligations with Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Nations, and recognize their inherent sovereignty. We do this by passing LD 395.