

Janet McMahon
Waldoboro
LD 785

February 18, 2026

To: Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

From: Janet McMahon, 1957 Friendship Road, Waldoboro, Maine 04572,

I am testifying in support of LD 785: An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act and LD 395: An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations.

Several years ago, I learned about a Portland Press Herald series by Colin Woodard called "Unsettled." I hope you have had a chance to read it. It explains how the 1980 Indian Lands Claim Settlement Act came to be. Even though I was in my late 20s when the series was published, I didn't know about it, knew virtually nothing about Maine's Native Americans, and had no idea how unfairly and cruelly the Wabanaki had been treated in Maine prior to the act, and in the forty years since. Over the past several year, I've had the good fortune to hear from many members of the Maliseet, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy and M'iqmac Nations and have since taken the time to learn more about the act and its flaws. It's time to legally grant the Wabanaki the same rights and access to the benefits federal law provides that every other tribe in this country enjoys. They should be able to determine how to live on their homeland, and to practice their cultural traditions. Not only would these two laws provide Wabanaki families and communities with the same economic resources as all other tribes in the United States, they would benefit the state as a whole.

Personally, I am convinced that our future depends on learning how Wabanaki connect with the land, waters, and wildlife around them – connections that we have, for the most part, severed. This legislation, in addition to righting too many past wrongs, will help put us on that path and allow us to begin to rebuild relationships between all of the people who call Maine home.

This legislation is long overdue. I urge you to support it as strongly as I can. And if Governor Mills chooses to veto it once again, I urge you, if the time comes, to individually vote to override that veto. Thank you very much for considering my testimony.

Respectfully yours,

Janet McMahon
Waldoboro, Maine