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LD 395

I am writing in support of LD 395 because the Wabanaki Nations deserve the recognition and rights afforded to the other 570 recognized tribes. Modernizing the Settlement Acts is long overdue.

In addition to opening up economic opportunities (see the well known Harvard Study) this bill would remove barriers to accessing funds for natural disasters, public health crises (including the opioid crisis), health care work force recruitment and enhancing environmental protection authority.

As a state, Maine brands itself as a champion of human rights, innovation, environmental protection and core values of “the way life should be”. Yet, for decades, state government has denied the Wabanaki Nations federal recognition and direct access to funding that is essential to sustaining those shared values in their communities.

I urge you to join the nation in recognizing tribal self-determination by voting ought to pass on LD 395.