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LD 395

I am a longstanding tax-paying resident of this state, and submit this testimony to ask for support for LD 395, an Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations. At present, the Wabanaki Nations must be explicitly written into each federal law to benefit from it, the only tribes nationally for which this is the case.

LD 395 would modernize the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act so that the Wabanaki Nations can benefit from most existing and future federal laws that apply to the other 570 federally recognized tribes. I understand LD 395 also extends to the Mi'kmaq Nation – which did not participate in MICSA – the same rights granted to the Penobscot Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians.

Passage of LD 395 would help the Wabanaki Nations leverage federal programs and funding that, elsewhere in Indian Country, have led to the creation of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in goods and services produced by Native businesses.

Again, for ethical and economic reasons, I support moving this bill forward.