



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Representative Laurie Osher 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**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary*

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Laurie Osher. I am proud to represent House District 25, which is most of Orono, located in the homeland of the Penobscot Nation. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of **LD 785, An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act.**

During my time in the Legislature, I have been proud to vote for bills that seek to recognize the sovereignty of the Wabanaki Tribes and begin to address the ways in which the Wabanaki have been prevented from accessing the same rights as other federally recognized tribes. Like LD 395, which you heard earlier today, LD 785 is critical to finally achieving those goals.

LD 785 is another long-overdue update to the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act. The current law does not recognize the Wabanaki Nations as sovereign, treating the Tribes more like municipalities than independent nations with inherent rights to self-governance and self-determination. As you have heard, this is far out of step with the way that federally recognized tribes in all other states have been treated and has consistently undermined the success and wellbeing of the Wabanaki people and rural communities for decades.

Wabanaki leaders have tirelessly advocated for their people to simply be treated as equal to members of any other federally recognized tribe. While we have made some progress over the past several years, we have so much more work to do, and together with LD 395, LD 785 represents an opportunity to finally begin setting things right.

Thank you for your consideration.