

Amy Roeder
Bangor
LD 395

Please excuse my lack of official letterhead and my inability to come to Augusta to stand before you today. Distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Amy Roeder and I am fortunate to serve as the Representative for Bangor's House District 23. My district, as well as every other House district in Maine, is on unceded Wabanaki territory. I have had the privilege of working with many folks from the Penobscot Nation in my pre-legislative work life and the least I can possibly do to pay them back for their generosity, kindness and collaboration is to stand with them as they ask the state of Maine to recognize their sovereignty. I have submitted testimony and/or have spoken on the floor about this issue every year that I have been in office. That seems like a long time to me, but the Wabanaki tribes have been waiting far longer. Maine remains the ONLY state in the nation that doesn't recognize the sovereignty of its federally recognized tribes and that should be a badge of shame for everyone in state government who had the power to change this injustice and did not act. Wabanaki tribes have missed out on millions of federal dollars each year because of this, effectively keeping tribal members institutionally oppressed and impoverished. It's time to change it. It's time to hold every single one of us in state government accountable because at this point, the lack of state recognition of Wabanaki sovereignty is a clear and unmistakable declaration that the State of Maine considers Indigenous people "less than." We have a moral imperative to correct the error of those that came before us. Thank you for your time.