

Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Judiciary

From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: February 18, 2026

Re: LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Committee on Judiciary, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I live in Bar Harbor and represent Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), a coalition of eighteen nonprofit organizations united by a shared desire for transformative action in response to the climate crisis.

MCAN stands in solidarity with the Penobscot Nation, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Mi'kmaq Nation and recognizes there is no climate or environmental justice without the inclusion of the tribes.

The Wabanaki Nations have a long tradition of stewardship of natural resources and the land. Their perspectives and traditional knowledge are crucial to realizing a future where humans can live together in harmony with other species and with the natural world.

As it stands, however, these Nations are not on equal footing with 570 other federally recognized tribes across the country. They are the only ones that must be explicitly written into each federal law to benefit from it. As a result, 2019 research found at least 151 federal laws from which the Wabanaki Nations have been excluded.¹

MCAN is particularly disappointed to see Wabanaki Nations blocked from being able to regulate federal environmental programs on their own lands. We support environmental efforts being led at the local level, including tribal governments' authority to regulate and protect overall water quality, ensure clean drinking water, and preserve and restore wildlife and marine ecosystems.

LD 395 is important because the Wabanaki Nations should be on an equal standing with others when it comes to federal laws like these – whether related to environmental protection, natural disasters, public health, or criminal justice.

For these reasons, MCAN urges you to vote “ought-to-pass” on LD 395. Thank you for your time.

¹ Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples Clinic. [“Federal Laws Enacted After October 10, 1980 For the Benefit of Indians or Indian Nations”](#). *Suffolk University Law School*. December 2019. Accessed February 18, 2026.