

Jill Saxby
Cape Elizabeth
LD 785

I am a retired Unitarian Universalist minister and a volunteer with the Maine Council of Churches' Public Policy Committee, representing the Council with the Environmental Priorities Coalition. My UU tradition and my Christian faith call me to deep respect both for the "inherent worth and dignity of every person" and "the interdependent web of which we are all a part."

I believe that fully recognizing the right to self-determination of the Wabanaki Nations by enacting the Task Force recommendations is a moral imperative. Taking this next logical step in what has been a long, often harrowing, process, is a matter not only of fairness, but a matter of our responsibility to the environment on which all of our lives depend. Protecting, preserving and restoring the "interdependent web" can only begin in a recognition of each person's, and each sovereign partner's, inherent worth and dignity.

The Wabanaki Nations have been sustainably protecting the environment in this part of the planet for thousands of years. Removing unfair legal barriers to Wabanaki self-determination and ability to regulate resource use on their own lands will further empower the Nations to do so more effectively.

The Settlement Acts have led to a broken system that serves neither the Wabanaki Nations nor the State and its citizens. Leveling the playing field by enacting and implementing the remaining consensus recommendations of the 2020 Task Force will benefit not only the human communities involved - both Wabanaki and non-Native -- but the larger interdependent web of relationships with the natural world we all live within, together

As a matter of human justice, human dignity and human flourishing, the time is long, long overdue. As a matter of the environmental challenges we face now, the time is, urgently, now. I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 785.