

Jon McLaughlin  
Houlton

March 17, 2021  
Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee  
437 State House  
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD554 - An Act to Create Gaming Equity and Fairness for the Native American Tribes in Maine

Dear Senator Luchini , Representative Caiazzo and Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee:

My name is Jon McLaughlin, and I am the Executive Director of the Southern Aroostook Development Corporation, a non-profit economic development organization located in Houlton.

Clarissa Sabattus of the Houlton Band of Maliseet approached me and discussed bill 554 with me.

SADC in the past has been neutral on the proposed construction of casinos in the region and is still neutral regarding casinos. However, when LD 554 was explained to us, we are supportive of the bill. The name says it all. Create Gaming Equity. All the bill does is put the Maine Tribes on the same playing field as the 500 plus tribes in the United States and the 49 other states. Maine Tribes have not been able to negotiate directly with the state.

This bill corrects that long injustice to the Maine Tribes. It does not guarantee construction of a casino.

Southern Aroostook Development Corporation, no matter how one feels about casinos, believes in equity for our native American citizens in Maine.

We urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" when you come out of committee with this bill. It is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your time and effort in looking into this bill.

Sincerely,

Jon A. McLaughlin, Executive Director  
Southern Aroostook Development Corporation