



To: Maine Legislature Committee on Judiciary
From: Amy Eshoo, Maine Climate Action Now
Date: May 30, 2023
Re: LD 2004: *An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations* OUGHT TO PASS

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Honorable members of the Committee on Judiciary, my name is Amy Eshoo. I am a resident of North Yarmouth and Director for Maine Climate Action Now, a statewide coalition of 16 grassroots organizations who support transformative action in response to the climate crisis. Our work as a coalition is to center equity and justice in climate action. We stand in solidarity with the Penobscot Nation, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Mi'kmaq Nation. The tribes in the land we call Maine deserve the rights, privileges, powers, duties and immunities similar to those of other federally recognized Indian tribes within the United States. It is time to begin to put the Wabanaki Nations on the same footing as the other federally recognized tribes again.

We believe that for Maine to face the climate crisis we need to work together as one to transition towards a new sustainable and rich future. But we can only do that when everyone has their basic needs and security met. In order for the tribes to prosper and meet their communities' needs in an ongoing and sustainable manner they need to be able to benefit from the federal funding made available to the other 570 federally recognized tribes. Some of these laws which have passed, that the tribes do not have access to, would not only benefit their communities, but the surrounding rural areas and communities as well.

Why are we allowing the 570 other federally recognized tribes in 49 states to have the benefits for their tribes and states and not Maine? Over the last 30 years the other federally recognized tribes in 49 states have seen economic growth of 61% while the tribes in Maine saw only 9%. It is apparent that the lack of access to various federal funding has held down their self-determination and economic viability.

We believe firmly that this is our issue too. When the tribes thrive, Maine will thrive. When the tribes prosper, Maine will prosper. I urge you to vote OUGHT TO PASS for LD 2004. Thank you.

Amy Eshoo
Maine Climate Action Now
LD 2004

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