



March 9, 2022

Governor Janet Mills
1 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Governor Mills,

We, the undersigned 105 organizations and businesses representing tens of thousands of Mainers from every area in Maine, urge your support for LD 1626 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act, LD 906 An Act To Provide Passamaquoddy Tribal Members Access to Clean Drinking Water, and LD 585 An Act To Enhance Tribal-State Collaboration, To Revise the Tax Laws Regarding the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and the Penobscot Nation and To Authorize Off-track Betting Facilities and Federally Recognized Indian Tribes to Conduct Sports Wagering.

On February 15, the public demonstrated unprecedented support for LD 1626 with over 1,600 filed written testimonies and over 100 people testifying orally during the daylong public hearing. Two days later dozens of people testified in support of LD 906 and LD 585. Such outpouring of support has rarely if ever been demonstrated for a particular policy issue during the history of the State of Maine. We ask you to listen to so many strong voices of Mainers and to do all in your power to enact these bills this year.

The Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act was heralded at the time of its enactment as a potential new model in tribal-state relations by elevating the State of Maine's role in the relationship with the Wabanaki and subordinating the Federal Government. This experiment has failed. LD 1626 seeks to rebalance the Wabanaki relationship with the State and Federal Governments making it comparable to the relationships between federally recognized tribes and State and Federal Governments in the 49 other states. Section two of the bill declares the purpose "is to establish that the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians enjoy rights, privileges, powers, duties and immunities similar to those of other federally recognized Indian tribes within the United States." LD 1626 would also make federal Indian law fully applicable to the Houlton Band of Maliseets, Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Penobscot Nation unless otherwise specified in the Maine Implementing Act.

Many people equate water with life. The residents of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik have endured poor quality, sometimes unsafe drinking water for decades. We believe this situation constitutes a public health emergency requiring immediate action. LD 906 is a well- designed bill to address the problems hindering the Passamaquoddy Water District and the Passamaquoddy Tribe from realizing what the United Nations declared on July 28, 2010 is "the right to safe and clean drinking water and

sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights” (UN General Assembly Resolution 64/292). We urge swift action on LD 906.

LD 585 embodies points of agreement reached between Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot leaders and you. Part A establishes the Tribal-State Collaboration Act. It creates a process for collaboration between state agencies and the Wabanaki Tribal Governments regarding the agencies’ programs, rules, and services that substantially and uniquely affect the Indian tribes or tribal members. Parts B through H propose tax changes recognizing the unique status of Wabanaki Tribal Governments with the intent to spur economic development and provide sources of revenue to fund governmental services. The final portion of the bill provides the Wabanaki with the exclusive right to develop on-line sports betting as a means to support Wabanaki governmental services. We support constructive dialog between the Wabanaki and the State of Maine. More importantly, when mutually satisfactory agreements are reached the State of Maine must demonstrate the capacity and resolve to implement such agreements.

We owe much to the Wabanaki. We want the State of Maine’s relationship with the Wabanaki to be centered on respect, fairness, justice, and equity. All Mainers thrive when the Wabanaki thrive. Enactment of these three bills would move the State of Maine closer to that vision.

350 Maine	Greater Bangor Area Branch NAACP
A Climate to Thrive	Harpswell Indivisible
Acadia Action	Indivisible Bangor
Acadia Center	Indivisible MDI
ACLU of Maine	Indivisible Northwest Kennebec
American Friends Service Committee, Wabanaki Program	Indivisible Washington County
Atlantic Salmon Federation	Islesboro Islands Trust
Bangor Racial and Economic Justice Coalition	Kennebunkport Climate Initiative
Baskahegan Company	Kennebunkport Conservation Trust
Brick Store Museum, Kennebunk	Land in Common
Brunswick Area Indivisible	League of Women Voters of Maine
Capital Area Indivisible	Loon Echo Land Trust
Center for an Ecology-Based Economy	Mahoosuc Guide Service
Citizens' Climate Lobby	Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust
Chewonki Foundation	Maine Association of Conservation Commissions
Community Action Works	Maine Audubon
Conservation Law Foundation	Maine Center for Economic Policy
Decolonizing UMaine	Maine Citizens for Clean Elections
Defend Our Health	Maine Climate Action Now
Elliotsville Foundation	Maine Coalition on Racial Equity
Environment Maine	Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Food AND Medicine	Maine Conservation Voters
Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy	Maine Council of Trout Unlimited
Friends of Acadia	Maine Education Association
Friends of Casco Bay	Maine Equal Justice
Gateway Community Services	Maine Farmland Trust

Maine Lakes Society
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners
Association
Maine People's Alliance
Maine Poor People's Campaign
Maine Public Health Association
Maine Rivers
Maine Shellfish Learning Network
Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy
Network
Maine Women's Lobby
Maine Youth for Climate Justice
Maine: Rise Up! Be Heard!
Mainers for Humane Immigration
March Forth
MDI Racial Equity Working Group
Midcoast Conservancy
Midcoast Indigenous Awareness Group
New Brackett Church (Peaks Island)
Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay
Open Space Institute
Orono Land Trust
Our Power
Pax Christi Maine
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Maine
Chapter
Pine Tree Amendment
Planned Parenthood of Northern New
England/Maine Action Fund
Portland Friends Meeting (Quakers)

Portland Trails
Preble Street
RESTORE: The North Woods
Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park
Sierra Club Maine Chapter
Solar Energy Association of Maine
Somali Bantu Community Association
Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative
Southern Maine Showing Up for Racial Justice
Suit Up Maine
Sundew Studio
Take Action Bethel
The Alliance for Economic Democracy
The Conservation Fund
The Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome
Center
The Nature Conservancy in Maine
The Ocean Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
The Wilderness Society
The Wilson Center at UMaine
TriTown Equity and Inclusion
Union of Concerned Scientists
Wabanaki Alliance
Wells Reserve at Laudholm Trust
Western Foothills Land Trust
Women's March Portland
Yarmouth Community Alliance for Racial
Equity

Cc: Senate President Troy Jackson

Speaker Ryan Fecteau

Senate Republican Leader Jeff Timberlake

House Republican Leader Kathleen Dillingham