



January 29, 2021

Hon. Anne Carney
Hon. Thom Harnett
Co-Chairpersons
Committee on Judiciary
Maine State Legislature
Augusta, ME

Dear Senate Chair Carney and House Chair Harnett:

Tribal state relations within Maine have a long and complex history. While we are in the midst of working towards passage of task force recommendations for changes to that relationship, it feels counterintuitive to entertain a bill for state recognition of another tribe that gives up the rights that we are working so hard to regain.

Being a tribal nation is sacred, and verification of such claims are necessary to protect the identity of our people, our ancestors, and ancestral territories. The federal process for acknowledgement is based in statute and demonstration of certain criteria is required for recognition or acknowledgement. When state recognition has taken place in other areas of the nation, they have an established commission or Office on Indian Affairs that oversee the process. We fear that state recognition of a tribe through a bill that does not require a process could set a harmful precedent. With no burden of proof, even those without Indigenous ancestry could use this same method to gain recognition, exploiting not only our culture and heritage but services and programs for Indians as well.

Sincerely,

Maggie Dana, Tribal Chief
Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point

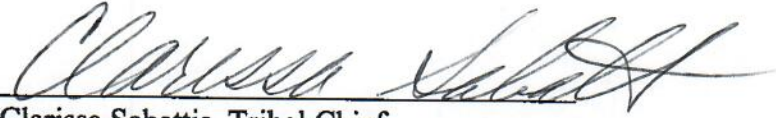
William Nicholas, Tribal Chief
Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township



Kirk Francis, Tribal Chief
Penobscot Nation



Charlie Peter-Paul, Tribal Chief
Aroostook Band of Micmacs



Clarissa Sabattis, Tribal Chief
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians

Chief Clarissa Sabattis
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
LD71

Greetings Senator Carney, Representative Harnett and members of the Committee on Judiciary. My name Clarissa Sabattis, I live in Houlton, and I am the Chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians.

Today, I submit a joint letter from the Wabanaki Chiefs in opposition to LD 21, "An Act to Provide State Recognition for the Kineo Band of Maliseet Indians".

I urge you to consider the concerns highlighted in our letter and I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.