

Wabanaki Alliance
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April 14, 2022
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The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
naomi.miguel@mail.house.gov

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
ken.degenfelder@mail.house.gov

RE: Support for H.R. 6707, *Advancing Equality for Wabanaki Nations Act*

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman,

The Wabanaki Alliance submits this letter requesting it be added to the hearing record for H.R. 6707, the Advancing Equality for Wabanaki Nations Act. Wabanaki Nations including the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Mi'kmaq Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Penobscot Indian Nation formed the Wabanaki Alliance in June 2020 to educate people of Maine about the need for securing sovereignty of the tribes in Maine. We strongly support H.R. 6707 and urge Congress to enact this legislation.

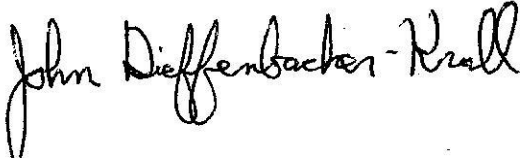
Maliseet Chief Clarissa Sabattis, Passamaquoddy Chief William Nicholas, and Penobscot Nation Chief Kirk Francis testified before the Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States on March 31 describing the many negative impacts sections 6(h) (25 U.S.C. 1725(h)) and 16(b) (25 U.S.C. 1735(b)) of the Settlement Act have had on Wabanaki Tribal Governments. The language of 1725(h) and 1735(b) have blocked Wabanaki Nations from utilizing numerous beneficial acts deemed by Congress important for federally recognized tribes in order to exercise their inherent powers of self-government and self-determination. The Wabanaki Alliance sees no credible argument for denying to four Wabanaki Nations with five tribal government powers and funding opportunities available to all other federally recognized tribes. Such a distinction in treatment can only be considered discriminatory.

Congress delegated to the State of Maine, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Penobscot Nation the ability to amend many provisions of the Maine Implementing Act (1725(e)(1)). However, the Office of the Maine Attorney General and Office of Maine Governor have questioned whether that delegation of Congressional authority can fully change the provisions of

1725(h) and 1735(b). H.R. 6707 responds to those concerns by having the body with legislative power change the law.

As noted in other submissions to the House Natural Resources Committee, H.R. 6707 will only apply to prospective acts and not apply retroactively. It is a modest yet needed bill to equalize the treatment of all federally recognized tribes going forward. The Wabanaki Alliance believes consideration of justice and equity argue for action on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Dieffenbacher-Krall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Dieffenbacher-Krall
Executive Director

cc: Representative Jared Golden, aaron.sege@mail.house.gov
Representative Chellie Pingree, evan.johnston@mail.house.gov