

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,

Pax Christi Maine **urges passage of H.R. 6707, *Advancing Equality for Wabanaki Nations Act***, as introduced by Representative Jared Golden and currently under consideration before the Natural Resources Committee.

Pax Christi Maine is part of a national and international movement working for peace, justice and environmental sustainability. Pax Christi, meaning “Peace of Christ”, is rooted in Gospel nonviolence and Catholic Social Teaching, which includes principles of human dignity, care for God’s creation, and solidarity. Support of right relationship with our Wabanaki neighbors exemplifies these principles.

It is clearly unjust that tribes in Maine are held back by a 40-year-old agreement with the state. As sovereign nations, the other 570 tribes across the United States, are moving ahead supported by federal laws, rights and responsibilities that the Wabanaki tribes are not able to access. **The *Advancing Equality for Wabanaki Nations Act* is narrowly designed to remedy this situation moving forward.** It does not retroactively change any existing laws. It does promise fair treatment going forward regarding federal funding for such things as disaster relief and federal legislation in areas such as health care and economic development for the tribes located in Maine.

The Catholic church, along with other Christian churches and organizations, is responsible for so much of the violence and suffering endured by Indigenous people in North America. Standing in solidarity with the Wabanaki people is a practice of nonviolence, restoration and justice. Recognizing their right to treatment equal to that of the other 570 federally recognized tribes around the United States does not undo that damage. However, we can, as people of faith and conscience, work together to move forward in a new direction. Our members urge you to vote in favor of H.R. 6707. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Quinn and Denise Dreher, co-coordinators, Pax Christi Maine

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