

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,

Hello, my name is Johnny Sanchez, I live in Orono, Maine. I work for and submit this letter on behalf of Food AND Medicine, a nonprofit in Brewer, Maine founded in 2002, that organizes around issues of food security and other root causes of poverty. Generally, our mission is to pursue a future in which people do not have to choose between food, medicine and other basic necessities. We endorsed this bill proposed by Rep. Golden and urge you and your fellow lawmakers to pass H.R. 6707.

The rights of indigenous tribes to self-govern as sovereign bodies influences their access to many of the absolute necessities for which Food AND Medicine advocates in our community. Despite tribes in Maine never having ceded the rights guaranteed to them as federally recognized tribes, the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) of 1980 has resulted in Maine tribes being unable to benefit from more than 150 federal laws passed since 1980. These federal laws have provisions that provide opportunities for economic development, increased access to healthcare, response to natural disasters, expanded environmental protections, increased job creation, and protection against the epidemic of violence against native women. H.R. 6707 would update MICSA to allow the Wabanaki tribes to benefit from future laws enacted to benefit tribes. These changes would represent a significant step towards equalizing the federal treatment of Wabanaki tribes with that of tribes in the rest of the country. This legislation is supported by all of the tribes in Maine and is in the same vein as a state law for which a public hearing drew over 1,500 public testimonies and over 200 letters-to-the-editor and op-eds in support.

These are all things that are core to Food AND Medicine's mission and that is why we hope you will commit to support H.R. 6707.

Sincerely,
Johnny Sanchez

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