

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,

Portland Friends Meeting (Quakers) in Portland, Maine, urges your support and swift passage of H.R. 6707, which would begin to redress the inequities caused by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA). Currently, the tribes in Maine – Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot – are excluded from many beneficial laws that apply to nearly every other federally recognized tribe in the country. H.R. 6707 would update MICSA to allow the Wabanaki tribes in Maine to benefit from future federal laws that are enacted to benefit Indian tribes.

Portland Friends Meeting submitted testimony in support of LD 1626, *An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act* to the Maine legislature, this spring. This Maine bill is based on the work and recommendations of a bipartisan task force. It seeks to restore self-determination to the tribes in Maine and acknowledges their inherent sovereignty.

Since 1980 Maine tribes have been denied the benefits of Federal laws that would improve public health, help tribes recover from natural disasters and deal with violence against women, and promote economic development for themselves and surrounding rural areas. While H.R. 6707 will not address laws that are already in effect, it will allow tribes to benefit from future laws. This is a step in the right direction.

Passing H.R. 6707 will end the denial of Federal benefits to the Wabanaki peoples in all future acts of Congress. It is a step toward fairness and justice. Portland Friends Meeting urges prompt passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Wayne Cobb, Ann Dodd-Collins, Jessica Eller, Jennifer Frick, Emily Troll
Right Relationship Working Group, Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Avenue, Portland ME 04103

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