



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
**An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of
The Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act**
February 19, 2026

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rev. Jane Field and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches, a coalition of seven Protestant denominations who have more than 400 local churches across the state with over 50,000 parishioners in their care. I am testifying on behalf of the Council **in support of LD 785**.

The Maine Council of Churches, a proud member of the Wabanaki Alliance Coalition, continues to affirm the sovereignty of the indigenous tribes whose land is now called Maine. We support their right to self-determination, self-governance, self-sufficiency and cultural identity, and lament that certain decisions made in the 1980 MICSA act have deprived them of these rights. We lament that for 40 years restrictions in MICSA have blocked the Wabanaki Nations from accessing all of the federal self-determination policies that have helped 570 other tribes in the United States.

Those who drafted MICSA were clear: it was meant to be a “living document” that should be updated as necessary. And six years ago, a bipartisan task force was clear in its recommendations for what needs to be changed. It is high time that all of those recommendations are acted upon so that what is broken in the original document can finally be repaired. It is the moral thing to do. It also happens to be the right thing to do for economic reasons: adding \$330 million to Maine’s GDP, creating 2,700 new jobs (half of which would go to non-tribal Mainers), increasing tax revenue by \$39 million a year, and reducing the shockingly high rates of child poverty within the Wabanaki confederacy.

In asking you to **vote OUGHT TO PASS on LD 785**, the Maine Council of Churches is asking the legislature to honor our state’s responsibility to the tribes and to honor the work of the task force by implementing their recommendations for changing MICSA. It is a necessary step toward repairing the terrible damage that has been done, and toward promoting harmony, reconciliation and mutual understanding between our communities. It is a step that is long overdue.