

Dear _____

Baskahegan is our 102-year-old family company that owns and manages 150,000 acres of timberland in Maine. We grow and harvest trees that we sell to over twenty mills and other customers in Maine and nearby Canada. We are writing in full support of H.R.6707—Advancing Equality for Wabanaki Nations Act—for the long-overdue benefits it will provide to our Wabanaki neighbors.

Federal legislation is needed because the State of Maine has been unerringly hostile to the Wabanaki since the state's founding in 1820. Indeed, there would not have been a successful land claims settlement 40 years ago if the federal government had not sued the state of Maine on behalf of the tribes.

Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch hit the nail on the head when the Court considered the case, *Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta* earlier this week. As reported in the *New York Times*, he said, "We have the treaties, OK, which have been in existence and promising this tribe since before the Trail of Tears that they would not be subject to state jurisdiction precisely because the states were known to be their enemies." While he was speaking of the Cherokee in Oklahoma, his words describe the enduring anti-Wabanaki animus reflected in the negative testimony on HR 6707 from Maine's governor, attorney general and a representative of Maine's forest industry's lobbying group. They argue that the issues of Wabanaki sovereignty should be dealt with on the state, not federal level, despite the state's continuing history of thwarting Wabanaki sovereignty at every turn. History proves that progress requires action at the federal level.

The main complaint raised by the Maine Forest Products Council (of which Baskahegan is a member) is that regulating tribal lands under federal law would add confusion and complication to neighboring landowners. Please know that Baskahegan already manages its lands subject to different regulations in organized towns and Maine's unorganized territory, and we even share a six-mile boundary with lands owned by the Department of the Interior. In stark contrast to the vague fears of "jurisdictional change" raised by the Council, these separate regulatory schemes have caused Baskahegan no difficulty whatsoever.

Please pass HR 6707 and finally bring justice and fairness to the Wabanaki tribes, the original inhabitants of Maine who have been consistently ill-treated since the arrival of our Euro-American ancestors in North America.

Sincerely

John Manganello
President & CEO

Roger Milliken
Board Chair