

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church
396 Gilman Road
Yarmouth, Maine 04096



March 2, 2022

Dear Governor Mills,

Consistent with The Episcopal Diocese of Maine's support of the LD 1626, the Vestry of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church ("St. Bart's") in Yarmouth, ME, urges you to support LD1626, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act.

As members of the greater Episcopal Church, we – like the State of Maine – have had to grapple with our past and the role the church has played in the dislocation, dispossession, and degradation of the indigenous communities in Maine and beyond. As a community, St. Bart's has taken the initiative to educate ourselves to more fully acknowledge our past and, in response, we have committed our time and resources to rectify, as we're able, those sins. We, therefore, are using our collective voice to ask you to support LD1626. We come to this place of political advocacy in our commitment to protecting the human rights that this legislation represents - long overdue for recognition.

For too long, our state has asked the Wabanaki to conform rather than to collaborate. The Wabanaki have been seen as competitors rather than as partners; an entity to be dealt with rather than a sovereign nation to be honored and respected.

LD1626 provides us – the whole state of Maine – with an opportunity to recognize the sovereignty of the Wabanaki tribes that, for too long, has been diminished and disregarded. This act not only rights a wrong, it is an act that will benefit the whole state: its people, its wildlife, and its land.

The Wabanaki tribes are asking that the state of Maine pass LD1626 and it is time that we honor their request as an act of trust and as an act of love. For Christians, there is no greater commandment than to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Priest and Vestry of St. Bartholomew's on behalf of our community

The Rev. Amanda Gerken-Nelson, Priest in Charge

Michele Johns, Senior Warden

Laurie Hyndman, Junior Warden

Ann Donaghy

Anne Berg

Deborah Wathen Finn

John Colianni

Kathy Abernathy

Lucie Hyde Tingley

Peter Sillin

Susan Peixotto

Arthur Woolverton