

## **FQM Minute on the Inherent Right of Tribal Sovereignty of the Wabanaki**

### **Minute on the Inherent Right of Tribal Sovereignty Of the Wabanaki People and the Support for Bills before the Maine State Legislature that would Recognize and Implement Tribal Sovereignty**

Members of Falmouth Quarterly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) unite in urging full support by the Maine State Legislature for bills that encompass the consensus recommendations reached in 2020 by a Task Force composed of Maine legislators, State officials and Wabanaki leaders, i.e., bills that acknowledge and support the sovereignty of the Wabanaki Tribes and Nations within Maine.

The terms in the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) and the Maine Implementing Act (MIA) have proven disastrous for the Tribes. These bills are designed to address those wrongs. For example, they would correct a fundamental denial embodied in the 1980 federal Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) that has prevented Wabanaki Tribes in Maine from benefiting from over 150 federal laws passed during the last 40 years, laws that were designed to assist and support Tribal health, safety, well-being and self-determination. As a result, Indigenous peoples in Maine suffer from disadvantages not found in any other state.

Unlike the 570 federally-recognized Tribal communities on lands outside of Maine, Wabanaki Tribes and Nations contend with restrictions and complicated regulations imposed by the Maine Implementing Act (MIA). Tribal communities outside Maine are subject to Federal Indian Law. Current bills before the legislature would make Federal Indian Law applicable to Tribes and Nations within Maine. It should be noted that Federal Indian Law, while supporting greater Tribal self-determination, enables states to enter into productive relationships with Tribal nations that not only benefit the Tribes, but also the surrounding non-Native communities and the State. It has been shown time and again, throughout the country, that when Tribes are prosperous the surrounding rural communities prosper as well. This bill is our opportunity to create this reality for Wabanaki communities and for Maine as a whole.

The current situation imposed by the State on Wabanaki peoples is morally and ethically wrong. Wabanaki communities only want what Tribes in other states enjoy—greater freedom to control their own destiny and to thrive. The bills addressing the shortfalls of the MICSA and the MIA provide the means to make this possible.

This Minute reflects the Quaker testimony of the sacredness of all individuals and our witness to support the inherent rights and dignity of Indigenous communities.