

Talking points from the Wabanaki Alliance

Pick which talking points you use based on your audience and where they fall on the political spectrum.

Social Justice: This is Maine's greatest inequity. We have an opportunity to change a system of oppression which has kept the thumb of Maine on the tribes for 40 years.

Equity: The tribes are asking to be treated like the other 570 federally recognized tribes. That's all. Nothing more. Nothing less. Maine would be screaming in hollering if the 49 other states received federal funding for education, health care, transportation, public safety, etc. and Maine didn't. Why are we allowing the 570 other federally recognized tribes in 49 states to have the benefits for their tribes and states and not Maine?

Fairness: Tribes in Maine and rural Maine have not benefited from 151 federal laws which have passed since the 1980 Settlement Act was signed. Why don't we want rural Maine and the tribes to have the same benefits as other tribes and states?

Protect Environment: For a millennia the tribes in Maine have been stewards of the land and natural resources. They will continue to do so as they always have.

Supporting our neighbors: The time is now to stand by our tribal neighbors. When they prosper, Maine prospers.

A Deal Broken: The 1980 Settlement Act holds resources for the tribes to purchase up to 300,000 acres. They have only been able to purchase roughly 66% of those lands for various reasons. 40 years later the cornerstone of the Settlement Act still goes unfulfilled.

State Lawsuits: The State has essentially been the lawyers over the years protecting large corporate interests. The State of Maine defends the polluters over our natural resources. This is expensive for taxpayers.

Self Determination: The tribes are merely asking to be able to determine their communities' futures. They cannot do this with the State of Maine dictating to them at every turn.

Rural Economic Benefits: If the tribes were able to have the benefits of federal tax laws they would be able to attract investors to their communities in rural Maine. This would benefit not just the tribes but rural Maine.

State Government Overreach: The State over regulates the tribes at every turn. This overreach has stifled economic development in rural Maine.

Protecting Maine's Outdoor Heritage: The tribes will continue to be good stewards of their lands. Their history of hunting and fishing is who they are and they will conserve land and wildlife because that's their heritage. Just like it's heritage for tens of thousands of Mainers.

Taxpayers: The Maine taxpayers are footing the bill for the State to sue the tribes at every turn because of the Settlement Act. Those resources should be spent elsewhere. Not fighting the tribes from keeping rivers clean for everyone.

The Legislation is based on the [bipartisan Maine Indian Claims Task Force work](#) conducted from July 2019 through December 2019. The legislation covers:

- Trust Land Acquisition
- Land Use and Natural Resources
- Fish & Game
- Taxing Authority
- Criminal Jurisdiction
- Civil Jurisdiction
- Federal Law Provisions
- Gaming, though approved by the Task Force, is NOT part of the legislation.

Fairness & Equity: The Tribes in Maine are asking to be treated like the other 570 other federally recognized tribes across the country. Since 1980 the tribes in Maine are unable to access what other benefits the federal government provides to tribes because of a provision in the federal Settlement Act. Maine Tribes must expressly be included in tribal law that is passed nationally. There are 151 laws since 1980 the tribes and rural Maine do not benefit from. [\(Compiled by Suffolk University\)](#) Would the State of Maine accept the other 49 states benefiting from federal legislation and funding and not Maine?

A Deal Not Complete: Joint a Tribal Council, of the Passamaquoddy Tribe v.

Morton, 528 F.2d 370 (1st Cir. 1975) affirmed that the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot Nation did indeed have title to 2/3rd of Maine lands. This was really the basis for the Settlement Act of 1980. Part of the 1980 Settlement Act was that the federal government hold money in trust for the Tribes in Maine to purchase up to 300,000 acres. (That's a far cry from 2/3 of the state.) For various reasons (sellers increase sale price when they hear tribes are interested; lands available are not suitable for tribal needs; etc.) the Tribes for 40 years have not been able to complete the cornerstone of the Settlement Act, purchasing limited lands which were taken from them. The tribes have only been able to purchase roughly 66% of those lands in 40 years.

How to Support the Wabanaki Alliance

- Donate to the Wabanaki Alliance [here](#) and sign up for their emails.
- Sign the Wabanaki Alliance's Petition for tribal sovereignty [here](#).
- Like them on [Facebook](#) and amplify their posts.

Resources

- [Wabanaki Alliance's Website](#)
- [Wabanaki REACH Resources on the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980](#)
- [MCV's Lunch & Learn Recording](#) with Penobscot Nation Ambassador Maulian Dana and Passamaquoddy Tribal Citizen and Attorney Corey Hinton (60min)

Write your own Letter to the Editor (LTE) or Opinion Editorial for your local paper!

- [350 Maine and MYCJ's guide for writing an LTE](#)