

**Testimony of John Dieffenbacher-Krall, Executive Director,
Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission (MITSC),
in support of
LD 394 An Act To Add Members of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs to the
Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission and Add Corresponding Members for the State
March 5, 2013**

Senator Valentino, Representative Priest, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary; my name is John Dieffenbacher-Krall. I live in Old Town, Maine and I appear before you today in my capacity as the Executive Director of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission (MITSC). Thank you for the opportunity to express MITSC's support for LD 394 An Act To Add Members of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs to the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission and Add Corresponding Members for the State.

When MITSC was initially created via the Maine Implementing Act (30 MRSA §6212) only the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Penobscot Nation, and State of Maine had representation on the Commission. Three years ago the Maine Legislature enacted a bill that was later approved by the Passamaquoddy Tribe and Penobscot Nation to add the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians to the Commission. LD 394 would seat the only remaining federally recognized tribe located within the border of Maine that does not possess official representation on MITSC. We view this proposal as a logical and beneficial action that will enhance Wabanaki-Maine relations.

Providing for the seating of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Tribal Government on MITSC brings all of the Wabanaki Tribes together in an intergovernmental forum to discuss their respective concerns concerning their individual and collective relationship with the State of Maine. The State of Maine will benefit from adding the Micmacs to MITSC by having an intergovernmental body to which it can appeal when it has concerns that would impact tribal-state relations. The ability to have regular dialogue within an official body can strengthen tribal-state relations.

Passage of LD 394 would complement another bill currently before this committee, LD 45 An Act To Include a Representative of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs in the House of Representatives. Together these bills will properly recognize the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Tribal Government and formally acknowledge the Micmac People who have resided in this region for thousands of years. We urge a unanimous ought to pass report for LD 394.