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NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL OFFICE

Maine Indian Program
22 Riverview Drive
Brunswick, ME 04011

Frank Ducheneaux
Special Council on Indian Affairs
Room 422
House Annex 1
C and New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Frank Ducheneaux:

The American Friends Service Committee through its Maine Indian Program has worked with Indians in this state and has had first-hand knowledge of their living conditions and their hopes through the last 30 years. For the last few years we have been doing public education of non-Indians about Native American issues, including the land claims case.

We share Secretary Andrus' concern about the need for clarification of parts of the proposed land claims settlement. In his statement at the hearing of the Select Committee on Indian Affairs on July 1, 1980, he stressed the need for explanation of: the status of land held after purchase by the Secretary; confusing parts of the jurisdictional relationships of the Passamaquoddy Tribe and the Penobscot Nation with the State of Maine and the Federal Government; sovereign immunity as it applies to the Penobscot Nation and the Passamaquoddy Tribe; and the body of Federal legislation under Title 25 that will be applicable to the Passamaquoddy Tribe and the Penobscot Nation after passage of this act.

We are pleased that these parts of the bill are being clarified. We consider it extremely important that the final understandings be expressed in a public statement. Clear, explicit explanations of what is contained in this bill are absolutely necessary. Unless people affected by the bill understand the implications of the terms of the agreement, the stage is set for decades of

conflict between the Maine tribes and the State. The explanation is necessary so that there will be little chance of differing interpretations of the settlement's terms once the bill is passed.

Many of us are disturbed that the State of Maine has insisted upon so much State jurisdiction; however, we realize that the conditions of the proposed settlement were established after months of difficult negotiations, and that it is for Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Maliseet people to accept or reject these terms of the settlement. Historically in agreements between Indians and the State or Federal Government, Indian people usually have suffered. With this in mind, we believe it is part of the Federal Government's trust responsibility to be sure that Indian people have the opportunity to understand fully the implications of this agreement, and that all Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, and Maliseet people have an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions about the final settlement proposal. We feel this can best be done by holding field hearings in Maine. Concerns voiced at hearings, whether in Maine or in Washington, D.C., should be considered carefully before the final bill is approved by Congress.

Finally, it is important that the settlement assure Maliseet people adequate trust protection of their land and rights as Indian people. Full Federal recognition of the Maliseet Band is long overdue. In "Federal and State Services to the Maine Indian" written in 1974, the Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission underlined the injustice of lack of Federal (and State) recognition of Maliseet people. We strongly support their view.

Sincerely,

Mary Griffith

Mary Griffith

staff of the Maine Indian
Program Committee