



Dear Senator Carney, Representative Harnett, and esteemed members of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Izzy Ostrowski, and I'm the Social Change Advocate at Preble Street, a human services anti-poverty agency with over fifteen programs and services provided across the state. I am testifying on behalf of Preble Street in support of [LD 906: An Act To Provide Passamaquoddy Tribal Members Access to Clean Drinking Water](#).

Healthy communities depend on dignity, equity, and opportunity for all, and right now, Maine is not a state of healthy communities. In our work at Preble Street, we see that our most vulnerable neighbors often don't have access to the most basic of human needs, including food, shelter, and water. Imagine you are living outside, with no home, limited access to public facilities, and few funds to continuously purchase much needed water. Imagine you are a parent living in our beautiful state and cannot provide your child with clean drinking water. These are the realities for too many of our fellow Mainers, and disproportionately so for Indigenous communities.

Access to clean drinking water is both a human right and a racial justice issue. Maine is not exempt from the disproportionate racial impacts of homelessness and hunger. Indigenous people in our country experience homelessness, hunger, and poverty at higher rates than white people and are less likely to have access to clean, accessible drinking water. This is unacceptable.

For decades and centuries, the impact of environmental racism and pollution has led to unsafe water conditions for the Passamaquoddy tribal members. It was reported last year that 1 in 10 Indigenous Americans do not have access to safe tap water or sanitation¹. In our own state, there are people who have gone their whole lives living in a place without reliable access to clean drinking water. This public health emergency needs urgent attention. We cannot continue to turn away from the gross injustices our neighbors live with every day. We must act now.

As you sit here today, Passamaquoddy tribal members will continue to be forced to use bottled water to drink, bathe, and perform other essential care duties. This bill is critical to ensuring safety, equity, and sovereignty for the Passamaquoddy tribal members. For this reason, Preble Street urgently asks you to vote in support of LD 906. Thank you for your time.

Submitted February 17, 2022

¹ Lakhani, Nina "[Tribes without clean water demand an end to decades of US government neglect](#)"