

SUSAN M. COLLINS  
MAINE

413 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904  
(202) 224-2523  
(202) 224-2693 (FAX)

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904  
May 28, 2013

COMMITTEES:  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,  
RANKING MEMBER  
APPROPRIATIONS  
ARMED SERVICES  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE  
ON AGING

Jamie Bissonette Lewey, Chair  
Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission  
PO Box 241  
Stillwater, ME 04489

Dear Ms. Bissonette Lewey:

Thank you for your letter of May 13, 2013. You have advised that you have two points of concern, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

First, you suggest that a "test" might be developed for determining when proposed congressional legislation might be ambiguous under 25 USC §§1735(b) and 1725(h). To remedy that possibility, you propose to develop a "test" which, if I understand you correctly, will reveal whether proposed legislation is, in fact, ambiguous or not. Although it is not clear to me how a test could be devised to predict whether legislation that has not yet been written would be ambiguous or not, I look forward to learning more about your discussions.

Second, you suggest the absence of a mechanism by which pending legislation could be assessed for its "potential impact on the Tribes and the State" with the possible consequence of "triggering inclusive language." I am not certain what you mean by "triggering inclusive language." With respect to a "mechanism" for assessing the potential impact of legislation, I would like to reiterate that I always welcome hearing directly from the Tribes and often do on pending legislation.

As you know, the Tribes are sovereign entities. Therefore, it is important that they have every opportunity to communicate with me directly on issues that may affect them. Accepting the views of other entities ostensibly on their behalf would be inconsistent with the Tribes' sovereign status.

Should the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission at any time wish to offer its perspective on federal legislation or other issues, I would welcome that. As I am sure you will understand, however, I will not view the opinions expressed by the MITSC as substituting for the views of the Tribes unless the Tribes expressly and unequivocally advise me that that is their wish.

Thank you again for your additional views.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER