

**STATE OF MAINE**

—  
**IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
TWO THOUSAND AND THIRTEEN**  
—

**JOINT RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE TREATY OF  
WATERTOWN OF 1776 ON THE OCCASION OF PRESIDENT  
GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY**

**WHEREAS**, on the occasion of President George Washington's birthday, February 22nd, the Treaty of Watertown is recognized as having originated at the request of General George Washington, and it is also recognized as our Nation's first foreign treaty concluded by the United State of America after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence; and

**WHEREAS**, the Treaty of Watertown was the first recognition of United States sovereignty by foreign Nations, as well as one of the earliest expressions of equality and brotherhood among all people; and

**WHEREAS**, this "Treaty of Alliance and Friendship" was signed on July 19, 1776, in the Town of Watertown in the State of Massachusetts Bay, just 15 days after the signing of the Declaration of Independence; and

**WHEREAS**, the treaty established a military alliance between the United States and the St. John's Tribes, the Maliseets and the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Mi'kmaq First Nations in Nova Scotia, 2 of the peoples of the Wabanaki Confederacy, during the Revolutionary War against Great Britain; and

**WHEREAS**, the treaty was signed by the "Governors," or Council, of the State of Massachusetts Bay, "in behalf of said State, and the other United States of America," just one day after the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed from the balcony of the Old State House in nearby Boston; and

**WHEREAS**, after the Declaration had been translated, the Maliseet and Mi'kmaq delegates said, "We like it well. We now see that America is right and Old England is wrong, and we will joint with you in this fight." Whereupon, according to contemporary accounts, the Chiefs who were present jumped up from where they were sitting during that meeting and manifested a desire to immediately go to war against Great Britain; and

**WHEREAS**, the preamble of the Treaty of Watertown quotes from the conclusion of the Declaration, asserting for the 13 colonies "that as Free and Independent States they have full power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts & Things which Independent States may of Right do"; and

**WHEREAS**, under the terms of the treaty, the Mi'kmaq and St. John's Tribes, the Maliseets and Passamaquoddy Tribe, committed to "supply and furnish 600 strong men or as many as may be" for service in the Continental Army, restitution would be paid for any injuries to each other and disputes would be settled peacefully. The tribes also protected the Maine border and launched attacks against British installations; and

**WHEREAS**, Captain James Bowdoin, for whom Bowdoin College is named, pronounced the new allies as brothers, and proclaimed, "the United States now form a long and strong chain, and it is made longer and stronger by our brethren of the Maliseet and Mi'kmaq Tribes joining with us, and may the Almighty God never suffer the chain to be broken"; and

**WHEREAS**, after the Revolution, the Constitution of the United States gave Congress the exclusive authority to implement pre-1789 treaties made under the authority of the United States; thus the 1776 Treaty of Watertown transferred to the Federal Government; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1976 Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts declared in an Executive Order that the Commonwealth has never ceased to recognize the treaty, in 1981 the Massachusetts State Legislature affirmed the special status of the Mi'kmaq and, since 1995, the Town of Watertown, Massachusetts has held an annual Treaty Day celebration; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Legislature, now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, and on behalf of the State of Maine, which was formerly a part of the State of Massachusetts Bay, take this opportunity to recognize the significance and importance of the Treaty of Watertown of 1776, which is still honored today, for declaring "the United States and the Tribes of Indians shall henceforth be at peace with each other and be considered as friends and brothers united for their mutual defense, safety and happiness"; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That official copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be delivered to the appropriate representatives of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkmikuk and Penobscot Indian Nation.