

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1900

H.P. 1271

House of Representatives, May 5, 2025

**An Act to Bring Parity to the State's Recognition of the Wabanaki
Nations' Authority to Provide Electric Power Districts and Child
Support Enforcement**

Received by the Clerk of the House on May 1, 2025. Referred to the Committee on
Judiciary pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 19-A MRSA §2201-A**, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 300, §1, is amended to
3 read:

4 **§2201-A. Notice to licensing boards and obligor; judicial review; Penobscot Nation;**
5 **Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians**

6 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
7 following terms have the following meanings.

8 A. "Board" means any bureau, board or commission listed in Title 10, section 8001 or
9 8001-A, any other licenser that is affiliated with or is a part of the Department of
10 Professional and Financial Regulation and the Department of Inland Fisheries and
11 Wildlife.

12 B. "Support obligor" or "obligor" means an individual who owes a duty of support and
13 over whom the Penobscot Nation and the Penobscot Nation Tribal Court have
14 jurisdiction or over whom the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Maliseet
15 Tribal Court have jurisdiction.

16 C. "Support order" or "order of support" means a judgment, decree or order, whether
17 temporary, final or subject to modification, issued by the Penobscot Nation Tribal
18 Court or the Maliseet Tribal Court for the support and maintenance of a child or a child
19 and the parent with whom the child is living that provides for monetary support, health
20 care, arrearages or reimbursement and may include related costs and fees, interest and
21 penalties, income withholding, attorney's fees and other relief.

22 **2. Notice.** The Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians may serve
23 notice upon a support obligor who is not in compliance with an order of support that
24 informs the obligor of the Penobscot Nation's or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians'
25 intention to submit the obligor's name to the appropriate board as a licensee who is not in
26 compliance with an order of support. The notice must inform the obligor that:

27 A. The obligor may request a court hearing in the Penobscot Nation Tribal Court or
28 the Maliseet Tribal Court to contest the issue of compliance;

29 B. A request for hearing must be made in writing and must be received by the
30 Penobscot Nation Tribal Court or the Maliseet Tribal Court within 20 days of service;

31 C. If the obligor requests a hearing within 20 days of service, the Penobscot Nation or
32 the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians will stay the action to certify the obligor to a
33 board for noncompliance with an order of support pending a hearing;

34 D. If the obligor does not request a hearing within 20 days of service and is not in
35 compliance with an order of support, the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of
36 Maliseet Indians will certify the obligor to the appropriate board for noncompliance
37 with an order of support;

38 E. If the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians certifies the obligor
39 to a board for noncompliance with an order of support, the board must revoke the
40 obligor's license and refuse to issue or reissue a license until the obligor provides the
41 board with a written confirmation of compliance from the Penobscot Nation or the
42 Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians that states the obligor is in compliance with the

obligor's order of support. The notice must state that revocation by a board or a refusal to reissue, renew or otherwise extend the license or certificate of authority is deemed a final determination within the meaning of Title 5, section 10002; and

F. The obligor can comply with an order of support by:

(1) Paying current support;

(2) Paying all past-due support or, if unable to pay all past-due support and a periodic payment for past-due support has not been ordered by the court, by making periodic payments in accordance with a written payment agreement with the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians; and

(3) Meeting the obligor's health insurance obligation, if applicable.

The notice must include the address and telephone number of the Penobscot Nation's or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians' support enforcement office that issues the notice and a statement of the need to obtain a written confirmation of compliance from that office as provided in subsection 10. The Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians shall attach a copy of the obligor's order of support to the notice. Service of the notice must be made in the manner provided for service of summons by the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 4. For purposes of this subsection, support enforcement action must be deemed to be an action pursuant to Chapter XIII of the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure.

3. Written agreement to pay past-due support. An obligor who is presently unable to pay all past-due support may come into compliance with the support order by executing a written payment agreement with the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and by complying with that agreement. A condition of a written payment agreement must be that the obligor pay the current support when due. Before a written payment agreement is executed, the obligor shall:

A. Disclose fully to the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians in writing on a form prescribed by the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians the obligor's financial circumstances, including income from all sources, assets, liabilities and work history for the past year; and

B. Provide documentation to the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians concerning the obligor's financial circumstances, including copies of the most recent state and federal income tax returns, both personal and business, a copy of a recent pay stub representative of current income and copies of other records that show the obligor's income and the present value of assets held by the obligor.

After full financial disclosure under this subsection, the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians shall determine the obligor's ability to pay past-due support and request the obligor to execute a written payment agreement consistent with the obligor's ability to pay, not to exceed the limits on income withholding in section 2356.

4. Failure to comply with written agreement. Failure to comply with a written payment agreement described in subsection 3 is grounds for license revocation unless the obligor notifies the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians that the obligor is unable to comply with the agreement and provides the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians with evidence of the obligor's current financial circumstances to support the claim. The consequences of failing to comply with a written payment agreement and the requirements to avoid license revocation, if the obligor cannot

1 comply with the agreement, must be stated in the agreement. If the obligor claims inability
2 to comply with a written payment agreement, the Penobscot Nation, upon motion to the
3 Penobscot Nation Tribal Court, or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, upon motion to
4 the Maliseet Tribal Court, may request the tribal court to determine the obligor's ability to
5 pay past-due support. After notice and an opportunity for hearing, the tribal court may
6 make a finding of money due and render judgment in that amount.

7 **5. Hearing.** An obligor may request a hearing in the Penobscot Nation Tribal Court
8 or the Maliseet Tribal Court upon service of the notice described in subsection 2. The
9 request for hearing must be made in writing and must be received by the Penobscot Nation
10 Tribal Court or the Maliseet Tribal Court within 20 days of service. The issues that may
11 be determined at hearing are whether the obligor is required to pay support under an order
12 of support and whether the obligor is in compliance with an order of support.

13 **6. Order.** The Penobscot Nation Tribal Court or the Maliseet Tribal Court shall issue
14 an order after hearing without undue delay as to whether the obligor is in compliance with
15 the obligor's order of support. The order must be based on the hearing record. The
16 Penobscot Nation Tribal Court or the Maliseet Tribal Court shall send an attested copy of
17 the order to the obligor by regular mail to the obligor's most recent address of record.

18 **7. Stay.** If an obligor timely requests a hearing to contest the issue of compliance, the
19 Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians may not certify the name of the
20 obligor to a board for noncompliance with an order of support until the Penobscot Nation
21 Tribal Court or the Maliseet Tribal Court issues an order after hearing that finds the obligor
22 is not in compliance with an order of support.

23 **8. Certification of noncompliance.** The Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of
24 Maliseet Indians may certify in writing to the appropriate board that a support obligor is
25 not in compliance with an order of support if:

26 A. The obligor does not timely request a hearing upon service of a notice issued under
27 subsection 2 and is not in compliance with an order of support 21 days after service of
28 the notice;

29 B. The Penobscot Nation Tribal Court or the Maliseet Tribal Court issues a
30 nonappealable, final judgment that the obligor is not in compliance with an order of
31 support;

32 C. The obligor abandons a timely request for a hearing on the Penobscot Nation's or
33 the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians' notice of noncompliance and is not in
34 compliance with the support order; or

35 D. The obligor fails to comply with a written payment agreement described in
36 subsection 3, does not notify the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet
37 Indians that the obligor is unable to comply with the agreement and does not provide
38 the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians with evidence of the
39 obligor's current financial circumstances.

40 The Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians shall send by regular mail
41 a copy of a certification of noncompliance filed with a board to the obligor at the obligor's
42 most recent address of record. The certification of noncompliance is prima facie evidence
43 that the obligor is required to pay support under an order of support and is not in compliance
44 with that order of support.

1 **9. Notice from board.** A board shall notify an obligor certified by the Penobscot
2 Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians under subsection 8, without undue delay,
3 that the obligor's application for the issuance or renewal of a license may not be granted or
4 that the obligor's license has been revoked because the obligor's name has been certified by
5 the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians as a support obligor who is
6 not in compliance with an order of support. The notice constitutes final agency action for
7 the purposes of judicial review under Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 7. Notwithstanding
8 Title 5, section 11006, the Superior Court may supplement the record, including records of
9 any proceedings before the Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians that
10 resulted in the certification under subsection 8.

11 **10. Written confirmation of compliance.** When an obligor who is served notice
12 under subsection 2 subsequently complies with the official order of support, the Penobscot
13 Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians shall provide the obligor with written
14 confirmation that the obligor is in compliance with the order of support.

15 **11. Agreements.** The Penobscot Nation or the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and
16 the various boards may enter into agreements that are necessary to carry out the
17 requirements of this section.

18 **12. Motion to modify order of support; stay.** This section does not prohibit a support
19 obligor from filing a motion to modify support with the Penobscot Nation Tribal Court or
20 the Maliseet Tribal Court.

21 **13. Reporting.** As soon as economically feasible and at least annually, all boards
22 subject to this section and the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation,
23 Division of Administrative Services shall provide to the Penobscot Nation and the Houlton
24 Band of Maliseet Indians specified information in machine-readable or electronic form,
25 according to standards established by the Penobscot Nation and the Houlton Band of
26 Maliseet Indians, about applicants for licensure and all current licensees. The Department
27 of Professional and Financial Regulation, Office of Securities shall provide the specified
28 information for only those current licensees who are residents of this State. The
29 information to be provided must include all of the following information about the licensee:

- 30 A. Name;
31 B. Address of record;
32 C. Federal employer identification number or social security number;
33 D. Type of license;
34 E. Effective date of license or renewal;
35 F. Expiration date of license; and
36 G. Active or inactive status.

37 **14. Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife report.** The Commissioner of
38 Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall provide annually to the Penobscot Nation and the
39 Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians in machine-readable or electronic form watercraft,
40 snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle registration information concerning obligors who are
41 residents of this State. The information to be provided must include all of the following
42 information about the registrant:

- 1 A. Name;
- 2 B. Address of record;
- 3 C. Make, model and identification number for each watercraft registered under Title
- 4 12, section 13052; each snowmobile registered under Title 12, section 13104; and each
- 5 all-terrain vehicle registered under Title 12, section 13155;
- 6 D. Type of registration;
- 7 E. Effective date of registration or registration renewal; and
- 8 F. Expiration of registration.

9 **15. Subsequent reissuance, renewal or other extension of license or certificate.** A
10 board may reissue, renew or otherwise extend the license or certificate of authority of the
11 obligor in accordance with the board's rules after the board receives a copy of the written
12 confirmation of compliance specified in subsection 10. A board may waive any applicable
13 requirement for reissuance, renewal or other extension if it determines that the imposition
14 of that requirement places an undue burden on the obligor and that waiver of the
15 requirement is consistent with the public interest.

16 **Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §3916**, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 189, §1, is amended to read:

17 **§3916. Tribal power districts**

18 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context indicates otherwise, the
19 following terms have the following meanings.

- 20 A. "Passamaquoddy Indian territory" has the same meaning as in Title 30, section
- 21 6203, subsection 6.
- 22 B. "Passamaquoddy Tribe" has the same meaning as in Title 30, section 6203,
- 23 subsection 7.
- 24 C. "Penobscot Indian territory" has the same meaning as in Title 30, section 6203,
- 25 subsection 9.
- 26 D. "Penobscot Nation" has the same meaning as in Title 30, section 6203, subsection
- 27 10.
- 28 E. "Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians" has the same meaning as in Title 30, section
- 29 6203, subsection 2.
- 30 F. "Houlton Band Trust Land" has the same meaning as in Title 30, section 6203,
- 31 subsection 2-A.
- 32 G. "Mi'kmaq Nation" has the same meaning as in Title 30, section 7203, subsection 4.
- 33 H. "Mi'kmaq Nation Trust Land" has the same meaning as in Title 30, section 7203,
- 34 subsection 6.

35 **2. Construction and application.** This section must be construed to provide the
36 Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Mi'kmaq Nation, the Penobscot Nation and the
37 Passamaquoddy Tribe the opportunity to acquire, develop, finance and provide electric
38 power within their respective trust lands and Indian territories to allow them to develop a
39 sustainable local economy. The rights applicable to municipal power districts as provided

1 in this chapter apply to any tribal power district of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians,
2 the Mi'kmaq Nation, the Penobscot Nation or the Passamaquoddy Tribe.

3 **3. Tribal power districts.** ~~Under the authority specified in Title 30, section 6206,~~
4 ~~subsection 1~~ The Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Mi'kmaq Nation, the Penobscot
5 Nation and the Passamaquoddy Tribe may form power districts pursuant to this chapter,
6 referred to in this section as "tribal power districts." A tribal power district formed by the
7 Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Mi'kmaq Nation, the Penobscot Nation or the
8 Passamaquoddy Tribe may consist of all or part of the Houlton Band Trust Land, the
9 Mi'kmaq Nation Trust Land, the Penobscot Indian territory or the Passamaquoddy Indian
10 territory, respectively. For the purpose of forming a tribal power district, the Houlton Band
11 of Maliseet Indians, the Mi'kmaq Nation, the Penobscot Nation or the Passamaquoddy
12 Tribe shall designate appropriate tribal officers and proceedings in place of municipal
13 officers and proceedings to implement the provisions of this chapter and any other laws
14 referenced in this chapter.

15 Subject to the approval of the commission under sections 2102 and 2105, a tribal power
16 district may furnish electric power transmission, distribution and supply services within the
17 district. An application by a tribal power district to furnish electric power transmission,
18 distribution or supply services must identify the boundaries of the trust land or Indian
19 territory to be served. Approval of the commission under sections 2102 and 2105 is not
20 required for a tribal power district to generate or manufacture electricity within the district
21 or to purchase, acquire, accumulate or sell electricity at wholesale or by private contract
22 for use within the tribal power district.

23 A tribal power district has the same rights, powers, privileges, obligations and limitations
24 of a municipal power district formed under this chapter, including, but not limited to, the
25 issuance of revenue obligation securities; the exemption of district property from taxation
26 under Title 36, section 651; and, in the case of a tribal power district that has received
27 approval from the commission under sections 2102 and 2105, the right of eminent domain
28 as provided under section 3911.

29 SUMMARY

30 This bill provides authority to the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Mi'kmaq
31 Nation to develop tribal power districts to provide electric power within their respective
32 trust lands.

33 The bill extends certain child support enforcement tools recognized for the Penobscot
34 Nation and the Penobscot Nation Tribal Court to the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and
35 the Maliseet Tribal Court.