Thank you Mauillian.

Tribal chiefs, Tribal Council Members, Tribal Members and Honorable Guests.

It is an honor to have you all here on Indian island at the inauguration ceremony of our Tribal Governor and Chief.

As representative of the Penobscot Nation to the Maine State Legislature I represent a political bridge between the State of Maine and our Tribal Government. It is not an easy task. We have many contentious issues in areas such as sovereignty, economic development, environmental protection, and Natural resources. Sovereignty and jurisdictional concerns are always at the top of the issues list. The issues become compounded when we find we know little or nothing about their history or background. Education, communication and understanding are needed in order to develop an equitable solution to these issues.
The keys to a successful State and Tribal relationship are recognition, respect, trust and equality.

The State has traditionally viewed tribal governments as being liabilities and not assets. The challenges tribes face in order to overcome this paradigm are great.

The State government has not considered that Tribal governments have become more sophisticated. Since the land claims we have strengthened our own governmental infrastructures such as police and safety, health services, Tribal Courts, our school systems as well as human services. We have a greater pool of college graduates who have come back to the tribes in various fields of expertise.

Maine tribes have been successful in some business endeavors and have contributed economically to their surrounding towns and municipalities. These contributions have gone unnoticed.

The Penobscot Nation has developed its own land management plans and regulations. It has a GIS system that is second to none. Tribes across Maine are experiencing their own successes.

It is time that Maine State government take a fresh look at Maine Tribal Governments and
recognize their contributions to the State and their
full partnership potential.

There needs to be reconciliation in this State
between its Tribal and State Governments.

We need to reconcile the past and move up to the
present so that we can lay a permanent foundation of
trust and mutual respect.

The world is changing and a highly competitive
global market is immersing. The State of Maine will
need all of its natural and human resources to
compete.

The Tribes and the State of Maine have an
opportunity to take the lead in this country and
redefine tribal and state relations in a positive
manner; One of partnership and equality, one of
growth and opportunity, one of vision and creativity.

We look forward to working with the State of
Maine towards reconciliation and redefining the
paradigm to include one of respect, recognition and
equality.

Thank you.