It is impossible to address all of the inaccuracies in Darryl's article in one brief statement. However, what is most important to take away here is that his agenda is to delegitimize the Abenaki tribes recognized by the state of Vermont to benefit his own interests and those of Canadian tribes, who have a stated intention for political and financial gain in the U.S.

This article has its own self-motivations and is not published without serious controversy and disputation from others. This is an opinion piece, and the motivations behind it are clear to those who understand the context and the possible rewards to those disseminating the narrative. It is irresponsible to publish an article of this nature that perpetuates historical trauma and causes harm to Native people. Darryl Leroux has shown that he is openly biased, does not adhere to standard ethical guidelines on research, and is non-objective.

There are rules, ethics, and guidelines around researching human subjects without prior informed consent, but the author has performed contracted human subject research of a disparaging nature on behalf of other vested parties in service to his own and their interests. This research is being done for no other reason than to try and delegitimize and sideline the Vermont Abenaki for political and financial gain, to advance a stated intention to garner benefits in the U.S.

All of the claims in the article emanate from or on behalf of Indigenous groups that hold a federal-level recognition status and are couched in terms of asserting control, exerting power, and eliminating competition. These motivations inform the sources chosen, the documentation accepted, the criteria established, and the definitions employed – all of these derived from standards developed by Euro-American governmental recognition structures, and required of and then self-policed by those who are successful in meeting those impositions. This internalizing of "Federal Anti-Indian Law" has the effect of severely limiting entrance and making sure that everyone is following the same rules, devised by the colonizing powers for the express purpose of advancing their own agendas. On the receiving end, we call this "lateral oppression."

Native communities who reside in Canada and in the United States live under different recognition guidelines within the colonized Euro-American structure and

have different lived experiences. As sovereign tribes living in the United States, we do not fall under the authority of any other foreign entity, foreign government, or other tribal governments. The four Abenaki tribes in Vermont went through a rigorous process of recognition that is afforded by Euro-American governments to obtain legal Indian status within the United States and have met the state's requirements - based on the Federal model - for recognition, including records of kinship and ancestry through genealogical documents and all of the other eight state-identified criteria.

The author uses statistics, statements, and quotes selectively to pitch a narrative of defamation and dismissal without qualifying context, and draws preconceived conclusions that support the premises. All of this is tossed into a deeply polarized and politicized national and international reckoning with historical and contemporaneous colonization. Traditional indigenous teachings call us to a very different approach, no matter our individual stories and journeys.

This selective and self-serving narrative is apparent throughout the article. Instead of disavowing one another in our myriad of lived experiences as mixed-heritage inhabitants – all of whom are present here now as a result of the colonial impositions of hundreds of years – in the scramble to out-compete each other in scarcity economies, we would be better served to recognize that the future of all of our grandchildren depends on healing and reconnection, and not reinforcing the systems that have enabled this destruction in the first place.

We recognize each other as relatives and accountable, not separable. To whatever generational degree removed we may be, we are still connected – this is about mutual relationships rather than transactions and should be a conversation and not a declaration. As fellow residents and citizens in what is now known as the State of Vermont, we look forward to continuing this relearning process with all who are here in these Lands and trust that discernment and well-being will prevail. We believe that this state has recognized a path forward, that we do not need to continue to pursue policies of division and erasure, and that we can and must progress toward healing relationships.

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About Abenaki Alliance: Abenaki Alliance is an inclusive community of four Western Abenaki tribes recognized by the State of Vermont — Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi, Elnu Abenaki Tribe, Koasek Traditional Band of the Koas Abenaki Nation, and Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation. In partnership with associated businesses and non-profit organizations, the mission of Abenaki Alliance is to build a strong, sustainable, and united presence that shares Abenaki heritage, culture, and values with those around us. www.AbenakiAlliance.org