

Kwai Senator White and Gail -

Please extend my apologies to the Committee as I will not be able to attend the meeting today.

There are a couple of informational points I would to share with the Committee. It is important - despite one person's assertions - that Abenaki be named as a targeted group. The apology should say "Abenaki and other indigenous people", not the other way around.

1. In Breeding a Better Vermonter Nancy Gallagher states: French-Canadians and Abenakis were seen as a foe and threat to the early colonial settlers of Vermont. They represented "an insidious and continuous invasion" of Vermont and were therefore targeted (Gallagher, p. 45)

2 Yes, there are other groups of First Nations people in Vermont, but far less in number than Abenaki. It was not until 1960 that people could select their own race. Prior to that, an individual's race was determined by census takers, known as enumerators. And it was not until 2000 that Americans could choose more than one race to describe themselves. In the 2010 census, it was reported that the largest group of indigenous people in Vermont was Cherokee at 300. Why? Because until the 2020 census, Abenaki were not counted - we had to have State or Federal recognition to be able to self-identify as such and be counted. Between the 4 recognized tribes, there are currently over 5,000 Abenaki who are citizens... far more are unable to find the documentation which would allow them to apply for citizenship or choose not to be a part of a tribe.

Please consider these points when discussing the language.

Regards,
Carol