

Steven Santiago
Orono
LD 928

To: Senator Stacy Brenner, Representative Lori Gramlich, and Honorable members of the committee

From: Steven Santiago

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 928, a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment

My name is Steven Santiago and am a student at the University of Maine .

I am writing as a student, an activist, and most importantly a young Mainer to urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 928.

Our environment is part of who we are. This is true on all levels from our humanity all the way down to our state to our gardens. Human beings have lived in Earth's ecology for eons. We are not separate from the flora and fauna we would gather and hunt. We are not separate from our emissions or agriculture today. We are not separate from our state and national parks. We are not separate from our gardens and homesteads. They exist as part of us - outside ourselves, yes, but fundamentally part of the human experience. There is no separating humans from their environment. We each are situated inside of it, given a unique perspective on the same shared world. We need to protect our environment not only for the sake of the environment itself, but for all of our sakes as well. There is no humanity without our human, earthly ecology. We ought to pass LD 928 as a form of self-care for ourselves now, and our children yet to come.

A constitutional guarantee is one of the strongest protections we can make for a healthy environment.

Our Maine identity is staked on our relationship to our environment, from indigenous members to the outdoorsman to the tourist.

Our communities will thrive as a result of increased health outcomes deriving from our fundamental relationship to the environment surrounding us.

I want to live in a healthy world. I want to live in a healthy state. The Pine Tree Amendment will help enshrine this duty for generations to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Steven Santiago

PTA LANGUAGE:

Article 1, Section 25. Environmental rights. The people of the State have the right to a clean and healthy environment and to the preservation of the natural, cultural and healthful qualities of the environment. The State may not infringe upon these rights. The State shall conserve, protect and maintain the State's natural resources, including, but not limited to, its air, water, land and ecosystems for the benefit of all the people, including generations yet to come.