

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

My name is Doretta Colburn and I live in Waterford. I am testifying in support of LD 928: a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment and I urge you to vote “ought to pass.”

I speak today on behalf of the Maine Council of Churches, the leading organization of Protestant Christian churches in our state, representing seven denominations statewide which include 437 churches with a total membership of more than 55,000. We support a mission statement in which “we promote the full humanity and dignity of every person, the sacredness of all Creation, and the opportunity for everyone to achieve their full potential.”

As a pastor, I have spent over 30 years listening to the heartbeat of human need, as well as the pulse of the earth in all of its wonder and beauty that provides us sustenance. They are inseparable. There is an interconnection between of all things upon which the fulfillment and vitality of our planet and everything in it and on it depends. John Muir, an ecological thinker of the mid and late 1800’s, often referred to as the Father of National Parks, understood that sacred connection. He once said, “when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.” Indeed, there is no true independence, but rather an interdependence that only thrives when the essential elements of a healthy and well-balanced ecosystem are able to flourish and thus foster growth. To that end, it is critical that we take responsible action to ensure that the environment upon which we depend is well protected so that everyone and every living thing can benefit from its health and achieve their potential.

We raise a small herd of bison and laying hens on our farm, as well as grow vegetables, berries and fruit trees. We understand the critical importance of healthy soil, clean water, and good air quality upon which our crops and our animals depend. These necessities are the lifeblood of our farm without which we could not provide healthy food to our neighbors and our family. They are the lifeblood for all of us. It is our responsibility to honor the sacredness of Creation, to value every person’s right to health and opportunity, and to do our part in protecting the very things that give us abundant life – a healthy, balanced environment without which none of us can thrive.

As partners in the interconnected tapestry of life, woven together in a sacred life-sustaining bond, it is not only our duty, but an act of wisdom to respect the resources of the Earth, using them responsibly and with reciprocity, protecting their vitality so that all who depend upon them will prosper. We must be advocates for one another. We must be advocates for the environment that gives us life. When our planet thrives, we will thrive. That is why I urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 928.

Respectfully submitted, Doretta Colburn