

21 March, 2023

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

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

Esteemed Audience,

My name is Mira Levine, and I am a junior at Waynflete School in Portland, living in Brunswick. I am writing to you today as a student and a concerned Mainer to urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 928.

As a lifelong resident of Maine, I have grown up with a close relationship to the natural world around me. Despite not being from a family who enjoys rigorous outdoor activities, I have countless fond memories of getting to know my state’s environment. Every summer Saturday, my mother and I go to our local farmer’s market and enjoy not only the fresh, colorful products, but the conversations with each of the farmers who have worked with the land to bring in goods for my family to buy. When I learned how to ride a bike, my father began to take me exploring the trails around our neighborhood. We came across a bridge over a river big enough to see turtles and frogs peeking out from under the water plants, and that location became my go-to spot to show family and friends. And nothing is better than looking out of my window on a weekend in winter and seeing the way that the snow outlines the branches on the trees outside.

Without adequate environmental protection, I will lose the ability to enjoy more of these experiences—there will be fewer stands at the farmers market, more garbage in the rivers will send away life swimming in it, and snow will fall more and more irregularly each year. You have the power to protect these experiences by supporting the Pine Tree Amendment. Allow me to share with you some additional reasons why the Pine Tree Amendment is in the best interest of all Mainers.

- Maine is known as “Vacationland” for a reason. Anyone who has visited or lived in Maine knows that it provides people with a wonderful experience in nature in every season. **Protecting the quality of our land, wildlife, air, and water is absolutely necessary in guaranteeing a prosperous future.**
- Ensuring the health and safety of our state land with the Pine Tree Amendment will **bring all Mainers together** through the shared opportunity to thrive in this land.
- The Pine Tree Amendment will provide broad guidelines to ensure that environmental impacts are **considered early** in the process of decision-making. This will create **long-term success** in the prevention of pollution and environmental harm.
- Steps taken early in the process of decision-making to address environmental threats will **reassure young Mainers** that their state legislators recognize their right to be youthful and creative and active in this beautiful state—and it will make certain that young Mainers’ time to do so **is not running out.**

We, as humans, are a fellow species permanently connected to this land. We depend on clean air and water, healthy produce, and flourishing animals to build our own meaningful lives. If you have lived in Maine all your

life, consider how valuable the environment was to you and how much your successors deserve to enjoy it the way you did. And if you are newer to Maine, think of all the reasons why this state is important to you—I guarantee that nature and wildlife have played a role in your love of the state.

Thank you for your existing passion for the development of a bright future for future generations. I urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 928 to solidify your commitment to current and future Mainers.

Respectfully submitted,
Mira