

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and honorable members of the State and Local Government Committee.

I am Rita Scott, a fourth grade student at Asa Adams Elementary School in Orono.

I am here in support of LD72 proposing the Spring Peeper as our state amphibian.

I love spring peepers! In my opinion they're the best type of frogs. When they start peeping, it means winter is FINALLY over, we can play outside without snow gear, and school will be over soon. They're like tiny alarms that tell you when spring has sprung! Plus, they're very important for our forests because they eat bugs, insects, and snails. Spring peepers are important to the health of our wetlands and forests, and they remind us of the delicate balance of our natural world. Spring peepers peep because it's their mating call. If we don't hear the peepers then it means the balance of their habitat is off.

Every spring, I eagerly anticipate their return, a sure sign that warmer days are ahead. I enjoy walking my dog on a little path my family calls Lupine Lane, that runs by the Orono Water Treatment Center and above the riverbank. In the warm weather it's blooming with life. There are snails and frogs galore, and the air is filled with the enchanting chorus of spring peepers. I love to try and catch the peepers, but they're really fast! It's so much fun to listen to them all peeping together. It sounds like a tiny orchestra!

Spring peepers are native to Maine and can be found all over the state. By making them our state amphibian we are also saying that we care about their woodland habitats. The woodlands are more than the spring peepers' home, they are the heart and soul of Maine. The woodlands are essential for the state's environment, economy, and the very fabric of what it means to be a Mainer. Let's make the spring peeper the Maine State Amphibian!

Thank you for your time. I hope you are compelled to vote for the spring peeper to be the Maine State Amphibian!