

Why the Pine Tree Amendment is Worthy of Amending the Maine Constitution

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide perspective on this important bill.

Each of you, I'm sure, would like to give the people of Maine a right to clean air and clean water, but some of you are hesitant to amend the state Constitution. That's understandable. Amending the Constitution requires a much higher standard because it represents a much higher calling – not just crafting today's legislation but improving the foundation upon which government serves future generations.

With that concern in mind, here are three reasons why I believe you should unanimously pass this bill out of committee.

The Pine Tree Amendment improves how Maine's government serves the people.

In the same way we keep a close eye on government to ensure it does not limit our right to free speech, the bearing of arms, or the practice of religion, we'll be able to ensure that the governor, the legislature, and state agencies do not create or allow the kinds of environmental harm that degrade public health. In fact, protecting the environmental roots of public health would become a principle of state government rather than merely the goal of patchwork legislation.

The Pine Tree Amendment provides equal protection for all Mainers.

No longer will income or race or zip code play a role in whether the state fully considers likely environmental impacts.

The Pine Tree Amendment is the chance of a lifetime for you, for the people of Maine, and for future generations.

As legislators who are dedicated to leaving a legacy of wisely protecting Maine's environment and protecting the health and well-being of the Maine people who rely on it, you are unlikely in your careers to ever see a better solution cross your desks.

Finally, this isn't really about you deciding whether Maine should have a Pine Tree Amendment. It's about you, having been presented with this opportunity, deciding to give the people of Maine the chance to vote on giving themselves the right to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment.

And I don't know about you, but everyone I talk to thinks they should have that right.

Thank you,

Jason Anthony
Bristol