

3/5/2021

To: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Mandy Ball

Re: Testimony in Support of the Pine Tree Amendment and LD 489

I am writing as a concerned citizen to urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 489.

**I moved to Maine 35 years ago.** I have lived all over the US. I have had the great fortune to have traveled a lot of the world. But Maine is home. Maine is the most wonderful place I have been. I travel for family and work. When I'm away, I sorely miss the quiet, the beauty, the birds and butterflies, the woods, the night sky, the space, the smells. When I get home, each time, I am relieved, happy, relaxed in a way I haven't been since I left. I really want to make sure I can always come home to the Maine I love. And I want this for all my fellow Mainers.

**In Maine, our quality of life,** as well as many of our businesses and our very economy, is dependent on the outdoors, the woods, our waterways, and our ocean. Environmental degradation is more than an aesthetic issue, more than a long-term disaster scenario with climate change. It costs money, jobs, health and lives right now. The Pine Tree Amendment would insure our right to clean water, clean air and a healthy natural environment.

**Prevention vs dealing with the aftermath:** With the Pine Tree Amendment (PTA), the emphasis could be on prevention. The PTA would ensure government decision making considers environmental impacts early in the process, when the prevention of pollution, degradation and environmental harm is most possible. It would make it possible to consider the science, facts and impacts in each part of the decision-making process, in order to fulfill the government's trust obligations, rather than wait until the end of the process, when only the aftermath can be dealt with. And when all else fails, the Maine Pine Tree Amendment will provide a process that can be used by community, public, government and business interests to provide a check on government authority that overreaches and fails to protect us.

**Pennsylvania and Montana have already passed similar amendments.** Their track records are good. They've tried it, and it works! There are ten states, besides our own, actively working on their own Green Amendments.

We all feel we have the right to clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment, but in practice that isn't the case. We are slowly losing the Maine I love. I see fewer birds, bugs, butterflies, and bees every year now. I see more ticks, due to climate change. We have had progress in cleaning up some areas in Maine and losses in others. We need a system that will protect our (currently imagined) rights to clean water, air, and environment. We need a system that will stay constant as government changes. The Pine Tree Amendment would do that for all of us. All Mainers deserve that, now and in the future.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mandy Ball