

Mark Brown
350 Maine

Chair Brenner, Chair Tucker, and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on LD 489, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment. I represent 350 Maine and 350 Downeast with this testimony.

I was introduced to Maine as a forestry student at the University of Maine in Orono. I fell in love with the state, particularly the clean air, clean water, and healthy environment. Further education at The Pennsylvania State University and a Ph.D. in Entomology and Ecology led to a career of research in Environmental Sciences. I then had the opportunity to move back to Maine in beautiful Washington County, where I now enjoy the Bold Coast, forests, and lakes. To me clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment are essential to everything that is Maine.

IMPORTANCE OF A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Laws and regulations exist to protect our environment but these are only good to the extent that they are enforced. Often, they are used to pollute legally by granting waivers or permits. As we have seen, the effective enforcement of these protections varies with changes in the legislative and executive branches. It takes a constitutional amendment to guarantee the protection of our environment. The state government would legally be obligated to provide these vital healthy resources. A constitutional amendment will mandate the protection of our environment by all Maine government officials. The Maine government would legally become trustees of our natural resources with all people in Maine being the beneficiaries. The rights of Maine citizens to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment will be applied to us and all future generations regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, or faith.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS:

I would like to discuss the importance of passing this Pine Tree Amendment to the economy of the state. Commercial fishing, forestry, tourism, and recreation all rely on a healthy environment. Without constitutionally protected clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment each of these industries would be threatened. Without these economic drivers of the state economy, Maine would be in dire straits financially.

We are also paying for not having an amendment protecting our air, water, and environment. Across the state people are paying for bottled water or water treatment. In particular I would like to mention our Passamaquoddy neighbors in Washington County who do not have access to clean water. We are also paying for increased health costs due to respiratory issues, cancers, and premature deaths due to environmental toxins.

Environmental legislation has been a boon for the economy.

For example:

- Industry declared that elimination of ozone-destroying CFC's was too expensive. Elimination of these chemicals saved the US economy \$1.25 billion in just 10 years, 1974-1983 (Pew Charitable Trust).
- EPA's 2012 mercury standards did cost the economy \$10 billion annually, but saved between \$37 and \$90 billion annually in public health benefits (Alan H. Lockwood).
- Automobile energy compliance cost \$150 billion, but consumers saved \$475 billion in reduced gasoline expenses alone (Alan H. Lockwood).
- The first 20 years of compliance to the Clean Air Act, 1970-1990, cost half a trillion dollars, but saved \$5 to \$50 trillion in health benefits (Alan H. Lockwood).

CONCLUSION

Finally, I quote Franklin L Kury, a Pennsylvania Representative in 1970 who proposed the first green amendment, ". . . population and technology have run amok through our environment and natural resources. If we are to save our natural environment, we must therefore give it the same constitutional protection we give to our political environment."

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Mark W. Brown, Ph.D.
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