



March 1, 2021

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

I am Melissa Dearborn, resident of Waldoboro, member of Midcoast Maine Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, and the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network writing to express **support of LD 489. The Pine Tree Amendment** will give all Maine citizens the honor of becoming **stewards of Maine's singularly wonderful environment!** Mainers will become proactive caretakers of water, land, and air, by considering environmental impacts first in crafting and implementing legislation. This means protection for those who work close to the land and those who benefit from all the Maine outdoors has to offer. The focus will be **PREVENTION rather than MANAGEMENT.** Healthy ecosystems will **SUSTAIN and STRENGTHEN the Maine economy.**

As a child in the woods and on the water in Parsonsfield, I learned about pickerel and sunfish in the water and Trillium and Lady's Slipper in the woods. I drank water from a spring, canoed and swam in a clear lake. Some nights I slept on the floating dock to watch the stars in the darkest, clearest nights I have ever known. **My childhood was punctuated by that singularly wonderful environment.** I learned to identify trees, track wildlife, listen for bird calls. I returned from our trips to the sea with pockets full of stones and a deepening connection to nature that influenced the rest of my life. Today, I reduce, reuse, recycle, compost, grow some of my food, collect rainwater, drive a Prius (208,000 miles), and I am a fierce protector of the salt marsh in my backyard which serves as home to all sorts of flora and fauna. I want my government to prioritize the environment and strengthen its accountability to protect our basic rights to a clean and healthy environment.

The values I learned as a child are present in my faith as a Unitarian Universalist. I believe that our daily choices need to reflect our respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part - a core belief in the UU tradition. **LD 489** was created with that very tenet in mind. The protection of our environment through this amendment will help Mainers support ALL people, especially communities disadvantaged by environmental health and safety concerns such as our minority, indigenous and immigrant populations. Think of the **INTENTIONAL protection this amendment can bring to these vulnerable communities.**

In my community, fishermen make their livelihood pulling shellfish from the Medomak River. My farmer neighbors grow for the community and the local food bank. **Those who rely on tourism, agriculture, forestry, and fishing need the overarching protections of this amendment to sustain their futures.** The economy is tied to its natural resources which in turn depend on a healthy environment. In our state, we seem to accept that environmental defilement is part of the game and then react to clean up. **LD 489 is proactive.** The focus is **PREVENTION rather than MANAGEMENT.**



As you see, **we can advance economic development AND protect the environment! The SCENIC and RECREATIONAL wonders** of our state will be protected under this amendment which, in turn, will support our tourism.

I would also like to add, this bill has **NO FISCAL NOTE** attached! When we adopt this amendment as part of our constitution, we will always have a legal means to preserve our environment, our MAINE, for future generations.

**There is a huge grassroots movement (businesses, organizations, and individuals) supporting LD 489. I ask each of you to support LD 489 for future generations!**

Sincerely,

Melissa Dearborn

[melissa.dearborn@comcast.net](mailto:melissa.dearborn@comcast.net)

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