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LD 489, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment

Testimony of Olivia L. Griset

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Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Olivia Griset. I am a resident of Brunswick. Professionally, I serve as the Executive Director of the Maine Environmental Education Association; I submit this testimony on behalf of myself, individually.

I am urging you to support LD 489, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment.

Our Maine identity is about access to the outdoors, woods, waterways, oceans. Growing up in Maine our youth need opportunities to explore our beautiful state, walking, biking, boating, hunting, and fishing. As older Mainers we need a place where we feel confident raising the next generation of Mainers...the beauty and natural health of the state is a critical part of our economy and identity. Access to clean water, air, and lands is a basic human right that must be protected. All Mainers deserve a right to this way of life for generations to come.

As a mother I have seen first hand the importance of a healthy environment for the health and wellness of my own young children. I feel so lucky to be able to raise my daughters in Maine-and I choose to do so specifically because of the incredible access to healthy lands, waters, and oceans. I want my daughters, in turn, to be able to raise their children here and have them grow up in a place that values and protects both human health and the health of the environment.

This resolution is critical because it ensures that all Mainers have the right to a clean and healthy environment for generations to come. This will ensure that all communities – regardless of race, ethnicity or income – have the same rights to clean water and air and healthy environments and the duty of all government officials to protect all communities equitably. The passing of this resolution will ensure a more just, sustainable and livable future for all Mainers.

Thank you for all you do to protect Maine, it's human inhabitants as well as those without a voice-the place itself-the land, the water, the nonhuman living creatures. These are the things that make Maine home and truly like no other place.

There is precedent for this type of resolution, a similar Amendment was passed in Pennsylvania and Montana and currently eleven other states are actively pursuing similar legislation. Let's be a national leader in Maine and act now to join in this critical effort to protect our home.

Please consider supporting the Pine Tree Amendment.