

Audrey Hufnagel
Damariscotta

3/8/21

To: Labor and Housing Committee

From: Audrey Hufnagel

Re: Testimony in Support of 489

My name is Audrey Hufnagel. I am a high school student from Damariscotta Maine and a climate justice advocate. Growing up in the small town of Damariscotta next to the Damariscotta River, I developed a love for nature from a young age. When I was little, I attended a nature-based summer camp. There, I would get to learn about the environment and wildlife in the woods and river. We would study water samples from nearby marshes and watch oyster growers at work on the river. These experiences were very impactful in my life and have fueled my love of nature. The Maine Green Amendment would help protect these places that I love for people now and generations to come.

The Maine Green Amendment can be used to stop harmful practices that could destroy Maine's beautiful environment. In states where an amendment like this has been implemented, environmentally harmful practices, such as fracking, have been successfully opposed using this amendment. A Green Amendment in Maine would mean that environmentally harmful laws or practices could be opposed for violating a constitutional right, allowing for a healthier and cleaner environment.

The Green Amendment will also give environmental rights to all people. This part of the amendment can be used to stop unjust environmental practices like sacrifice zones where a marginalized community is harmed to benefit others. This promotes a more just environmental system.

Passing a Green Amendment also sends an important message. It says that Maine cares about the environment and will protect it. By making the right to a clean and healthy environment part of the Maine constitution, it promotes the idea that environmental rights are fundamental rights, on par with the right to freedom of speech. Not many states have implemented policies like this, and Maine has the chance to be a leader in making this statement.

One of the things that makes Maine such an amazing place is its abundant natural beauty. From the coast to the northern woods, Maine has so many natural places. This is what makes me love living in Maine so much. Maybe someday, this will make me want to raise a family here. When I am old, I still want to be able to enjoy the woods and waters of my home state. I want to show my grandchildren the natural places that I love now. I want Maine's natural beauty to stay intact, I want a livable environment, I want there to be just environmental practices that benefit everyone. This is the Maine that I want to see, that I want to live and that I want future generations to be able to experience. I therefore urge you to support this bill.

Respectfully submitted,
Audrey Hufnagel