

Diane Oltarzewski
Belfast

Co-chairs Brenner and Tucker and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee

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

My name is Diane Oltarzewski, resident of Belfast, and I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with you as you consider this proposed constitutional amendment. Nothing can be more compelling - with this Amendment we have the ability to enshrine the desire we share as Mainers for a healthy environment, in the form of an inalienable right, one that other states have already affirmed. Maine can help lead the way to make this the law of the land, and we should.

We have seen time and time again how narrow business interests can succeed in circumventing, diluting, or outright demolishing the regulations designed to protect our environmental rights. Human health and the resilience of ecosystems inevitably deteriorate in the wake of such actions. We should not have to spend valuable time and energy re-litigating the same battles over our right "to a clean and healthy environment, including pure water, clean air and healthy ecosystems."

The bill articulates my expectation that the State, including each branch, agency and political subdivision, shall serve as trustee of the natural resources of Maine. To declare — in this unambiguous way, that we take our obligation seriously — is the least we can do for our children and future generations.

This Amendment ought to pass, and I urge you to do everything in your power to see that it does.

Thank you.