

Beedy Parker
Camden ME

To the Maine State Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Committee Chairs Senator Stacy Benner and Representative Ralph Tucker

My name is Beedy Parker and I have lived in Camden ME since 1975. I am asking you to vote to support LD489 the Maine Pine Tree Amendment.

I am 81 years old and for most of my life I have tried to address the need to protect the environment and the natural world that we entirely depend on for our own existence. I worked, as a volunteer for the last 50 years, to bring consciousness of our dependence on the natural services of the environment that we inhabit.

I grew up with asthma and allergies which made me more aware of this dependence, on clean air, good water and enough of it, healthy soil to grow our food, and the blessed relief of being in the natural world. I had thought that knowledge of this dependence would bring us unanimous support of environmental protection of these essential services, but I underestimated the difficulty of this task.

In the Middle West, I observed first hand the depredation of large scale industrial agriculture, surrounded by tanks of liquid fertilizers, pesticides and straightened streams. After coming to Maine, I wrote a local natural history, to learn about the land myself and to help teach the children in the schools. In observing the Board of Pesticide Control for years, I could see the difficulty that the board and staff had in attempting protect waters and neighbors of spray operations, The industry took precedence and its lobbyists made themselves known. Working with MOFGA, we warned against the spreading of sewage sludge, which is largely unregulated, leaching heavy metals and petrochemicals. We worked on teaching recycling locally, to keep waste out of leaching landfills and air polluting incinerators, we taught composting to reduce the bio-degradables and turn them into soil amendment.

When I and an inordinate number of my friends were diagnosed with breast cancer, we started a group called "Save the Canaries" and tabled and mounted teach-ins, on toxic burn products (like plastic), indoor air pollution (because a new school was being built), and food safety. But when some of us "walked for a cure". and wanted to have a table on carcinogens, we were told that would offend some of the big donors, so the lesson we took home was that carcinogens were OK as long as we raised money to find a cure for cancer.

Now we see climate change barreling down on us, and we have just begun to recognize this as a people. It will affect everything we need, already is affecting agriculture and municipalities and health. Maine is responding, I believe, trying to mitigate our fossil fuel emissions, but even here, there is not yet enough recognition of the essential carbon sinks, the forest, the fertile soils, the photosynthesizing natural lands that must be protected from now on.

We can say that regulation should not impede industry, that we can't be competitive without toxic materials, that particular industries are too important for the economy,... or that God will take care of his Creation and we don't need to worry.... or that we can fix it all with technology or that you only live once and have the right to live high and consume unfettered,... that this amendment is silly.

But we don't really believe that. We really know that we can't escape to another planet. We know we are responsible. We want to be responsible. We need an amendment to our constitution that tells us so, confirms and upholds our conviction, gives us the legal ground to stand on in protecting this natural world and ourselves as its dependents.

I ask you again, to vote in support of this bill, LD489, The Pine Tree Amendment, to help us prioritize that without which we cannot exist, our essential and long term support system, the natural world of Maine

Thank you for your attention.

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