

There are at least six reasons I support LD 489, a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment (the “Pine Tree Amendment”). I urge the Committee to support bringing the Amendment to the full Legislature.

It would **provide some Judicial balance and protection** from a majority in the Legislative Branch infringing on the rights of a Minority and from the Executive Branch undoing previous legislation, etc.

It would **help define what are rights, responsibilities and privileges in relation to the environment**, as do other Amendments in the Bill of Rights. We have a Right to Religious Freedom, privileges of assembly and non-profit status, and responsibility to do so safely and without political activity. We have a Right to Bear Arms, a privilege to own many but not all categories of weapons, and a responsibility to do so safely and lawfully. Likewise we have a right to breathe a healthy balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide, a privilege to use some carbon based fuels, and a responsibility to do so safely for ourselves, the ecology, and future generations. That right is threatened by corporations who assert that they have a right to profit, when in a democracy profit should instead be seen as a privilege matched with responsibility (i.e. democracy does not equal capitalism). The Pine Tree Amendment and process could help clarify rights, responsibilities, and privileges.

In their book, *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, Brown and Garver pose five questions that a right to a healthy climate could provide a context for addressing. What is an economy for? How does it work? How big is too big? What is fair? How shall it be governed? Answers to these questions are unique to individual communities, projects and ecologies, while **a Right to healthy environment sets boundaries and protects the common good and commonwealth**.

We have seen pristine Maine water polluted by industry and agriculture, protected and renewed by the Clean Water Act legislation, and threatened by executive actions. Treaties to protect watersheds have been undermined and broken. The Pine Tree Amendment could **protect the voice of all affected by decisions**, from current corporate shareholders to future generations, from owners and exploiters to those who are left with waste and residue to deal with.

As Bill McKibben notes in his book, *Falter*, we are quickly running out of time before further sea level rise, temperature increase, depletion of resources, change in weather patterns, and shift in carbon dioxide to oxygen ratio in the air we depend on to breathe make a clean environment no longer a choice. The Pine Tree Amendment is needed to protect our future, while we still have a choice. People and the future of the earth need **a measure of protection from corporations that have grown in power to affect legislation, political races, Court appointments, etc. without bearing responsibility for the future or in many cases for outcomes of their policies**.

A clean environment and unlimited resources were taken for granted in the colonization of America and the founding and expansion of the United States, and writing of the US and Maine Constitutions, but this is no longer tenable. **There are limits to growth and exploitation and either we anticipate and protect them by adding this Amendment or the ecology enforces them**. Thank you.

Mark Rains, Vienna, ME

Mark Rains
Vienna, ME

There are at least six reasons I support LD 489, a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment (the “Pine Tree Amendment”).

It would provide some Judicial balance and protection from a majority in the Legislative Branch infringing on the rights of a Minority and from the Executive Branch undoing previous legislation, etc.

It would help define what are rights, responsibilities and privileges in relation to the environment, as do other Amendments in the Bill of Rights. We have a Right to Religious Freedom, privileges of assembly and non-profit status, and responsibility to do so safely and without political activity. We have a Right to Bear Arms, a privilege to own many but not all categories of weapons, and a responsibility to do so safely and lawfully. Likewise we have a right to breathe a healthy balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide, a privilege to use some carbon based fuels, and a responsibility to do so safely for ourselves, the ecology, and future generations. That right is threatened by corporations who assert that they have a right to profit, when in a democracy profit should instead be seen as a privilege matched with responsibility (i.e. democracy does not equal capitalism). The Pine Tree Amendment and process could help clarify rights, responsibilities, and privileges.

In their book, *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, Brown and Garver pose five questions that a right to a healthy climate could provide a context for addressing. What is an economy for? How does it work? How big is too big? What is fair? How shall it be governed? Answers to these questions are unique to individual communities, projects and ecologies, while a Right to healthy environment sets boundaries and protects the common good and commonwealth.

We have seen pristine Maine water polluted by industry and agriculture, protected and renewed by the Clean Water Act legislation, and threatened by executive actions. Treaties to protect watersheds have been undermined and broken. The Pine Tree Amendment could protect the voice of all affected by decisions, from current corporate shareholders to future generations, from owners and exploiters to those who are left with waste and residue to deal with.

As Bill McKibben notes in his book, *Falter*, we are quickly running out of time before further sea level rise, temperature increase, depletion of resources, change in weather patterns, and shift in carbon dioxide to oxygen ratio in the air we depend on to breathe make a clean environment no longer a choice. The Pine Tree Amendment is needed to protect our future, while we still have a choice. People and the future of the earth need a measure of protection from corporations that have grown in power to affect legislation, political races, Court appointments, etc. without bearing responsibility for the future or in many cases for outcomes of their policies.

A clean environment and unlimited resources were taken for granted in the colonization of America and the founding and expansion of the United States, and writing of the US and Maine Constitutions, but this is no longer tenable. There are limits to growth and exploitation and either we anticipate and protect them by adding this Amendment or the ecology enforces them.

I urge the Committee to support bringing the Amendment to the full Legislature.

Thank you.
Mark Rains,
Vienna, ME