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Auburn

My name is Savannah Shaw and I am a senior at Colby College, originally from Auburn, ME. I am here today to express my support for LD 489 - RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment To the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment, otherwise known as the Pine Tree Amendment. This amendment ensures all Mainers have access to a healthy environment, including clean air, clean water, and outdoor resources for present and future generations.

At the entrance to Baxter State Park, there is a boulder on the side of the road that has been painted with a colorful landscape including a bright blue river with a fish swimming upstream, a black bear ambling towards the riverbank, endless evergreen trees, and mighty mountains in the background. At the top of this landscape are the words "KEEP MAINE BEAUTIFUL". This art in the midst of one of the state's largest protected areas is a reminder that this place we are so fortunate to enjoy is the way it is because we have decided to keep it this way. It is important to keep Maine beautiful to ensure that current and future generations can enjoy the environment around them.

I want all Maine residents to have the same, and better, access to and experience with our state's wonderful natural resources that I have had in my youth and young adulthood. From day trips to Popham Beach with my friends, to hiking Mt. Katahdin with my dad, to learning how to fish on Moosehead Lake with my grandfather, I made some of my best memories with the people I love in Maine's great outdoors. Adopting the Pine Tree Amendment will ensure that the children of today, and future generations, will be able to learn from and enjoy nature in the same ways that I have while making lifelong memories.

This Amendment to the state's constitution secures everyone's access to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment for as long as they live in Maine regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or ability. It protects our inalienable rights and provides constitutional pathways to defend ourselves from potential state infringements upon these rights. The Pine Tree Amendment makes sense and is an important step in establishing equity and fairness for all.

The Pine Tree Amendment secures each person's right to a healthy environment that will allow them access to our state's natural resources for recreation, education, and continuing many of Maine's great outdoor traditions. This amendment establishes a constitutional right for all Mainers, both current and future, to live healthfully and enjoy the environment around them regardless of their identity. For these reasons and more, I urge the committee to support the Pine Tree Amendment to guarantee that we keep Maine beautiful for now and for generations to come. Thank you.