

March, 4th 2021

To: Environment and Natural Resources Committee

From: Madison Sheppard

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

I am writing to you as a youth climate activist to urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 489.

The Pine Tree Amendment will ensure that the state of Maine and its future inhabitants will have the right to a livable future by establishing a clean and healthy environment. This is crucial to the youth of Maine who have to face our futures with great uncertainty of our own safety and health, especially those who are from marginalized and vulnerable communities. Maine is well known for its great outdoors and many adventure destinations, and thus the state relies on its snow for skiing and snowboarding, healthy forests for hiking, and shorelines for swimming and fishing. The climate crisis will cause a decline in Maine's influx of tourists. There is a large grassroots movement in support of this amendment consisting of locals, organizations, and small businesses that rely on tourism and a healthy community to flourish. The state of Maine has a reputation of leading by example when it comes to taking leaps towards climate justice and other issues; Montana and Pennsylvania have already passed a similar bill for their states and seven other states are actively in the process of following suit, what is Maine waiting for?

As a youth in the midst of a climate crisis, I had to give up the rest of my childhood years to join the climate activist movement. Our futures are not up for debate, and living in a clean and healthy environment is a human right. The Pine Tree Amendment cements that right into and highest law, leading in the right direction to keeping us and our beautiful state safe and healthy.