

Maya Faulstich  
Yarmouth ME  
LD 928

To: Senator Stacy Brenner, Representative Lori Gramlich, and Honorable members of the committee

From: Maya Faulstich

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 928, a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment

As a high schooler in Yarmouth Maine, I am here today as a student activist with Maine Youth Action to urge you to pass LD 928: Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to a Clean and Healthy Environment (The Pine Tree Amendment)

Climate action is essential for our future as a society, but we cannot take real measurable actions without first acknowledging that we all have the right to a clean and healthy environment. Preserving the natural environment is essential for the health of people in Maine, and across the country. These rights are as fundamental to citizens as the right to free speech and the right to vote. Here in Maine, we are known for our expansive oceans and coastlines, our wildlife, our delicious lobsters, and our beautiful parks and trails. Without these sacred spaces, what would Maine be? Who would we be? The environment is part of Maine's culture and the well-being of every single individual who lives here. Research has proven again and again that the more time we spend in nature, the healthier and happier we will be. Personally, my happy places are the ocean and the ski trails. When I am out sailing or skiing, breathing the fresh air, I am free. Yet, the snow is less consistent than it was 10 and 20 years ago, there is litter everywhere in the oceans and lakes, and the air is smothered with pollution. I shouldn't have to question my right to breathe clean air and drink clean water and neither should my descendants. We should be allowed to grow up without questioning the environment of our future.

The Pine Tree Amendment ensures that all communities, no matter ethnicity or income, have the same basic rights to a healthy environment. The Pine Tree Amendment is not just an amendment, it is a movement, with dozens of Maine organizations, businesses, and individuals supporting it. Similar amendments have been passed in Pennsylvania, Montana, and most recently New York, protecting their communities from PFAS, harmful mining, and other environmental hazards.

When we face the facts, we all know the climate is changing and we have to take action. That may spark many different emotions in different people. Sometimes fear, sometimes sorrow, often denial. There is space for those emotions, but now we have reason to hope. The Pine Tree Amendment gives me hope for my future, and for our collective future. Please join me in supporting the Pine Tree Amendment so that we can spread this hope and make a positive difference for you, your children, and your grandchildren, and so we can continue to enjoy our fundamental right to a clean and healthy environment for generations to come.

Thank you,  
Maya Faulstich