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TO: Senator Stacy Brenner, Representative Lori Gramlich, and Honorable members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee

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

Senators, Representatives, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Kristina Grimaldi, I am a resident of South Portland and a student at the University of Maine School of Law. I am writing today to urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 928.

At the University of Maine School of Law I took a course entitled ‘Right to a Clean Environment,’ studying the history, enactments, and use of similar environmental rights amendments.

Like other amendments, the Pine Tree Amendment has the potential to serve as an important tool to protect the environment and mitigate the harmful effects of climate change while also ensuring equitable access to a clean environment for marginalized communities. While there are already environmental laws and protections in place, there still exists environmental degradation which puts the health of the ecosystem and the public at stake. The PTA will provide for greater protection for all people and serve as another tool to hold the government accountable where current laws are lacking.

Looking at other states that have passed similar amendments, there has been no significant evidence that such amendments have harmed the state’s economy, an argument frequently cited by opponents.¹ In contrast, there is a need for the PTA to protect natural resources for which our state’s vital industries rely— such as fishing, lobstering, timber, and tourism.

Giving more protection to the environment will benefit Maine now and in the future, as tourism, business, and public health all rely on maintaining natural resources and a healthy, clean environment.

¹ *The Precedents and Potential of State Green Amendments*, Rockefeller Institute of Government Center for Law & Policy Solutions (July 2021), <https://rockinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CLPS-green-amendments-report.pdf>.