

March 20, 2023

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

From: Bonnie (Heather) Hardy

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

My name is Heather Hardy and I live in the village of Round Pond, in Bristol. I am a Maine Master Naturalist, a teacher, a musician, and a concerned citizen. I am writing to urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 928.

I graduated from the Maine Master Naturalist Program in 2020. Part of the requirements after graduating is to volunteer to teach others about the importance and beauty of nature and to teach about the connections in nature and how we are all intertwined. Some of us graduates have not only volunteered but have also been employed to pass on our knowledge. I work for Hidden Valley Nature Center in Jefferson teaching 4th grade classes. It is truly a beautiful thing to see children connecting to nature.

Children **deserve, need, and should have the right** to explore and play in natural places that are clean and healthy. We won't have a community of healthy children if they don't have a healthy environment with clean air to breathe and clean water to drink.

Children **know** how important it is to have a clean environment. One 4th grade girl sadly told me that soon there will be more plastic in the ocean than there are living beings. Some other kids spoke up saying how upset this makes them. They want pollution to be prevented.

Children are **concerned** about our world and don't like to see any kind of trash in the woods and along the trails at the nature center. They **understand** that our environment needs to be clean. We, as adults, need to be able to let children know that they will always have a clean environment.

Research shows that we all feel better emotionally, physically, and mentally when we have been out in the fresh air. Everything is connected. It is time for Maine to make living in a healthy environment a right that cannot be taken away from us. Our children are counting on us to make this happen.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie (Heather) Hardy