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

From: Anna Siegel

Three years ago I summited Mount Katahdin with my dad. We woke up incredibly early on an August morning and threw ourselves onto the Abol Trail, navigating massive boulders before the coffee and hot chocolate had kicked in. I didn't raise my head from my muddy boots until we had reached the top with its scraggly wooden sign: "Mt. Katahdin: 5,269 feet." My state seemed as big as the world. A collage of fields, roads, woods, and rivers spread out below. It looked fragile from such a great height. I am a student who has many years of hiking ahead of me. I want to keep exploring, searching, striving for ever higher mountain peaks—and for that, Maine needs the Pine Tree Amendment. Amending the Maine Constitution in this way writes environmental protections into the highest state law and legally solidifies what would otherwise be empty words of "sustainability" and "action." The amendment has a lens of equity too, as it would protect clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment for all people. Spring is on its way, and I think more and more these days about my time on Katahdin and the summer hiking to come. I think about my future and what would be left of without a healthy environment. As a birder, I also think of oncoming spring migration and how it becomes more distorted every year. Natural processes are becoming mutated because of anthropogenic climate change. Maine is a haven for declining bird species that breed here, and if we protect our clean water and air it will stay that way. So as a birder, a hiker, a climate justice activist, a Mainer, and a young person trying to make my way through a changing world, I support the Pine Tree Amendment and take comfort in how it would safeguard my environmental rights.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anna Siegel