

LETTER WRITING TOOLKIT



PINE TREE
AMENDMENT

WELCOME TO OUR LETTER-WRITING TOOLKIT

This toolkit has been designed for writing letters and creating eye-catching, soul-warming envelopes, in support of the **Pine Tree Amendment (PTA)** to Maine legislators.

The bi-partisan bill (LD 489), sponsored by Senator Chloe Maxmin and amended and passed by the Joint Standing Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources on March 17, 2021, would add to the Maine Constitution's Bill of Rights "the right to a clean and healthy environment and to the preservation of the natural, cultural and healthful qualities of the environment." This form of amendment has been proposed and passed in Pennsylvania and Montana.

Personalizing your letter is key. In this toolkit, we've included examples and instructions to create fun, personalized, and irresistible letters and envelopes as well as more information on the **Pine Tree Amendment**.



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SAMPLE LETTER

COPY, PASTE, & PERSONALIZE!

DATE:

Dear Honorable (NAME OF YOUR LEGISLATOR)

Thank you for your service representing our community in the legislature.

Briefly introduce yourself. I am a (TEACHER, STUDENT, FISHERMAN) and I live in (TOWN)

I am writing to ask for your support for the Pine Tree Amendment, LD 489, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment. This legislation would add language to the Maine Constitution guaranteeing all Mainers the right to a clean and healthy environment.

Here are a few reasons why I support it: (SAMPLE POINTS BELOW: SEE TALKING POINTS FOR MORE IDEAS TO INSPIRE YOU AND MAKE THEM YOUR OWN)

(We'd like to emphasize values in this sample letter like:

- the love of the outdoors
- the protection of future generations
- the rights to clean water, air and healthy environments will be legally on par with the rights to bear arms and freedom of speech)

I urge you to vote to pass on LD 489 and send it to the people for their vote.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

(NAME/Signature and ADDRESS)

Full text of the amendment at bottom of the letter:

Article 1, Section 25. Environmental rights. The people of the State have the right to a clean and healthy environment and to the preservation of the natural, cultural and healthful qualities of the environment. The State may not infringe upon these rights. The State shall conserve, protect and maintain the State's natural resources, including, but not limited to, its air, water, land and ecosystems for the benefit of all the people, including generations yet to come.

TALKING POINTS

The PTA ensures that all Mainers have the right to a clean and healthy environment for generations to come.

The PTA ensures that all Legislatures, Governors, laws, and permits will honor our constitutional environmental rights. Laws can be made and unmade, but the Constitution is permanent.

The Constitution has greater legal significance than statute, so the PTA enshrines our rights in a way that Mainers have never had before.

Our Maine cultural identity is about our outdoors – woods, waterways, ocean, and mountains – hiking, hunting, and fishing. All Mainers deserve a right to this way of life for generations to come.

The PTA holds the government accountable to protect our basic rights to clean and healthy environments.

The government should never get in the way of your clean air, clean water, outdoor space—now, or in the future.

This amendment gives the people more opportunity to challenge the government when a law, permit, or any other action threatens our basic rights.

There is a huge grassroots movement behind this amendment, with dozens and dozens of Maine organizations, businesses, and individuals supporting.

Pennsylvania and Montana have already passed this kind of environmental amendment. There are eleven states with active efforts to pass similar environmental rights amendments.

Pennsylvania's Amendment has been used to check legislative overreach that would have put in place automatic waivers of environmental protection standards for fracking, relieved the industry from notification requirements where there was potential drinking water contamination of private wells, and more. PA & MT amendments are also being used to prevent harmful gold mining operations; advance drinking water protections from PFAS contamination; preventing state legislators from raiding environmental protection funds; requiring consideration of science and impacts before permitting environmentally damaging operations; securing cleanup of toxic contamination and more.

The main principle of the healthcare industry is to do no harm. This should be our primary principle for our natural resources as well.

TALKING POINTS

The PTA will provide broad guidance that ensures government decision making—substantively and procedurally—considers environmental impacts early in the process when prevention of pollution, degradation and environmental harm is most possible

The PTA will place the rights to clean water and air and healthy environments legally on par with the rights to bear arms, to free elections, to free speech, freedom of religion and the rights of victims of serious crimes to be treated with respect, fairness and dignity

The PTA will strengthen environmental justice by ensuring all communities—regardless of race, ethnicity or income—have the same rights to clean water and air and healthy environments and the duty of all government officials to protect all communities equitably.

The PTA will empower communities to address the government’s unconstitutional infringement on environmental rights such as clean water and air, by providing constitutional grounding for their advocacy and access to the courts for redress.

LD489 LANGUAGE

Article 1, Section 25. Environmental rights. The people of the State have the right to a clean and healthy environment and to the preservation of the natural, cultural and healthful qualities of the environment. The State may not infringe upon these rights. The State shall conserve, protect and maintain the State’s natural resources, including, but not limited to, its air, water, land and ecosystems for the benefit of all the people, including generations yet to come.

TIPS FOR SENDING YOUR LETTER

1 **START WITH THE SAMPLE LETTER**

You can take the sample letter, edit it or completely rewrite it & stuff it into a beautiful, irresistible envelope. We encourage you to do two letters, one for your State Senator and one for your State Representative.

2 **PERSONALIZE YOUR LETTER**

Legislators are not impressed or persuaded by form letters, even if they receive a lot of them. So, personalizing your letter is very important. Keep in mind, it does not need to be long to make its point. Speak from your heart!

3 **DON'T FORGET!**

Make sure to add your name, address, date, and the name of the legislator to your letter.

WHERE TO SEND YOUR LETTERS

Follow these links to find your [State Senator](#) and [State Representative](#)

“MAD LIBS” LETTER FORM

Use this fun, “Mad Libs” style tool to send a personalized letter. Fill in the blanks, using lots of different colored pens! It’s a great way to make your message as memorable as your decorated envelope!

Send a picture of your letter to our email (see page 14) and we will share it to our Instagram and Facebook @pinetreamendment to inspire others to write and send their own!

Dear _____,

My name is _____. I am _____,
and I live in _____. I am writing to ask for your support of the **Pine Tree Amendment, LD 489, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment.**

My favorite place in Maine is _____ because _____.

I'm worried _____


I'm *excited* about the **Pine Tree Amendment** because it would guarantee all
Mainers the right to a healthy environment. AND _____

AND _____

I (implore, urge, suggest) _____ you *to vote* **YES** on **LD 489** for

Sincerely, gratefully, respectfully, all my best, love,

Dear Representative

My name is Michelle Henkin. I am an artist & grandmother and I live in NEW HARBOR. I am writing to ask for your support of the Pine Tree Amendment, LD 489, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment. 

My favorite place in Maine is Harbor Island in Muscongus Bay because when I am out there, I feel so in touch with the natural world - SKY, SEA, - ROCK

I'm worried that PROFITS of CORPORATIONS will be prioritized over the HEALTH and Well-being of our COMMUNITIES! AND I'm worried about LOSS OF HABITAT, OCEAN ACIDIFICATION, DESTRUCTION OF WETLANDS, and OIL TANKS - PIPELINES.

I'm excited about the Pine Tree Amendment because it would guarantee all Mainers the right to a healthy environment. AND ensure that the environmental protections

we enjoy now won't be rolled back AND it would protect all the businesses that rely

on our environment being healthy AND it would require government to consider

CUMULATIVE impacts when making decisions so that ALL people in MAINE AND future generations can enjoy healthy lives amidst the beauty we all love!

I (implore, urge, want) WOULD LIKE you to vote YES on LD 489 for ME, my children, my GRANDCHILDREN, and ALL PEOPLE in MAINE

Sincerely, gratefully, respectfully, all my best,

Michelle Henkin



CREATE & DECORATE YOUR ENVELOPES

Use this template and take inspiration for the examples we've provided to create & decorate custom envelopes for each of your letters. This a fun and exciting way to make sure your letter is unforgettable!

ENVELOPE EXAMPLES

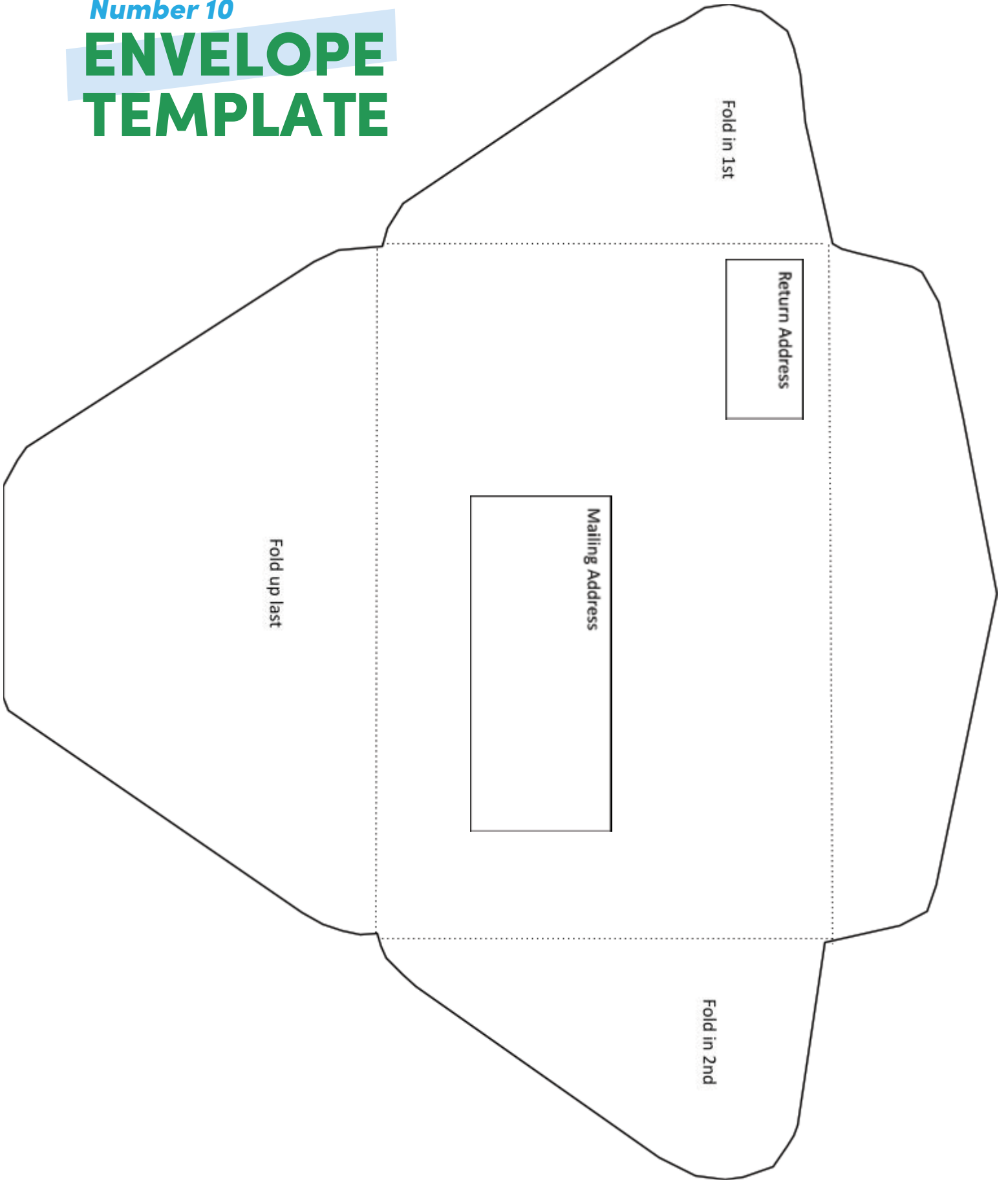


ENVELOPE EXAMPLES



Number 10

ENVELOPE TEMPLATE



SHARE YOUR LETTER-WRITING EXPERIENCE!

We'd love to connect with you. Share photos of your letters, envelopes, and even the letter making process! Follow the links below to connect:

***FOLLOW US @pinetreamendment
on Facebook and Instagram***

EMAIL US at downtoearth145@gmail.com

VISIT www.pinetreamendment.org

CONNECT WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

Find your ***State Senator*** and ***State Representative***