**Writing Activity: Taking a stand for Maine’s Freshwater**

**Earth Science: Unit 2 Watersheds**

**100 Total Points: (50 as Writing, 50 as Project)**

 Maine is a state that is defined by its beautiful natural environment, and Maine’s identity, history, and economy are all closely connected to the abundance of lakes, rivers, streams, bogs, aquifers, and estuaries found throughout the state. Threats to these freshwater systems are also threats to Maine’s wellbeing and future, and as we’ve discovered over the past few weeks, Maine’s waterways are unfortunately not as healthy as they might seem at first glance. And whether or not you realize it, your personal quality of life—now, and in the future—is/will be impacted by these water quality issues.

 But what’s an individual like yourself supposed to do in this situation? Are there steps that you can take to try to make your concerns heard? Of course there are! We live in a democracy, and citizens are allowed to voice their concerns in hopes of making the World a better place. In this assignment, you will voice your concerns about one aspect of poor water quality in Maine.

**Task 1: Determine which freshwater or estuary issue that we’ve discussed is the one that you care enough about to write a letter to someone in hopes of making things better**. Do you like going to the beaches in Maine? Do you like to fish? Do you like being on or around the water? Do you like to eat fresh seafood? Does someone in your family run a business that relies on tourist dollars for income? Since the start of the year we’ve explored numerous ways in which Maine’s quality of life is being impacted by water-related concerns. There are SO many ways that poor water quality impacts you—your job is to find ONE issue that you personally care enough about to write a letter.

**Task 2: Once you know what you want to write about, you need to figure out who you are going to write to**. Is there a business that is polluting the river? Is there an organization, or politician, who has the ability to influence big decisions? Does the town have a chamber of commerce that might share your concerns? Do you want to write a letter to a newspaper in hopes of encouraging other people to stand behind you?

**Task 3: Figure out what you want to say**. You need to be able to explain to others WHAT your concern is, WHY you are personally impacted by that concern, and HOW you would like things to change.

**Structure: Your letter will consist of two paragraphs.**

Paragraph One-- Describe the issue that you are writing about. State what the specific concern is, describe how you are PERSONALLY affected by this water issue, and provide an example of a SINGLE, SPECIFIC location in Maine where there is evidence of this problem. Finish by explaining how this issue also impacts others in Maine, providing at least ONE statistic (supported by research) that backs up your claim that this impacts people in Maine.

Paragraph Two-- In the second paragraph you suggest a solution to the problem that you are describing, and you identify WHO can/should step up to address the problem. Finish with either a reason for hope, or a warning of gloom if nothing changes.

What you need to produce and turn in:

1) An outline of your essay, written on the form I have provided, that you complete BEFORE you write your essay. The outline will include answers to EACH of the questions that is listed in the “Structure” section of this assignment.

2) A typed, hard copy version of your essay. PLEASE SAVE your digital/electronic version of your essay, and plan on EDITING your essay one (or more) times until it is juuuuuuuuuuuussssssssttttt right.

Please keep in mind that your goal in this essay is to convince someone else (like me)

1. That there is a specific, serious issue facing Maine’s watersheds that deserves my attention,
2. that you have developed a solution to this issue, and that solution is both reasonable (it has a high chance of succeeding) and appropriate (it is very clearly designed to address the concern that you have),
3. and that you care about this issue (you are personally motivated to take action as a citizen of Maine to improve the situation).

Your grade for this assignment will be based on how well you organize your thoughts before beginning your essay, the depth and thoroughness of your research, and the quality and structure of your writing.