



Environmental Justice Task Force

Support for a Green
Amendment to the New
Jersey Constitution

March 12, 2020

WHO WE ARE:

As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm and promote seven Principles, which we hold as strong values and moral guides. Four of these core principles are:

- ❖ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part;
- ❖ The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- ❖ Justice, equity and compassion in human relations; and,
- ❖ The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process.

In recognition of these principles, we find it necessary to advocate for the adoption of an Amendment to the New Jersey Constitution to protect our fundamental rights to pure water, clean air, and a healthy environment, not just for our own sake, but for the sake of all residents and future generations.

WHY THE STATUS QUO IS INADEQUATE:

Communities across the nation are suffering as the result of environmental degradation. They are being denied clean water, clean air and healthy soils in which

to grow healthy foods. Whole communities have not been protected from floods, drought and storms. Preservation of healthy plant and animal communities is not assured. For decades, communities and activists have relied on legislation to fight for a cleaner environment. Despite the passage of many Federal and State laws to protect our need for clean water and clean air, legislative advocacy has failed us. Implementation of laws designed to protect us and our ecosystems has been uneven and often unfair. Enforcement has been subjected to political pressures. The sad truth is that our laws are designed to better accommodate pollution than to prevent it. As a result, people feel powerless when it comes to preserving the quality of their water, air, public parks, and special natural spaces.

Furthermore, communities of poor people and minorities find themselves particularly hard hit, as they are disproportionately targeted for placement and expansion of polluting industrial operations. Therefore the time has come to bypass reliance on the laws and turn to the ultimate authority: our state constitution.

WHAT WE WANT:

We believe that every person has a right to a clean and healthy environment, including pure water, clean air, and ecologically healthy habitats, as well as the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of the environment.

Therefore, we support the Concurrent Resolutions now pending in both the New Jersey Senate and Assembly (SCR30 & ACR80), which propose a constitutional amendment to establish that the State is trustee of public natural resources which include air, water, flora, fauna and public lands, and guarantor to the people of other environmental rights. The State would not only recognize public natural resources as the common property of all the people - the people to include both present and future generations - but also be required to preserve public natural resources, as well as prevent others from destroying or damaging public natural resources. This

amendment would become part of the Constitution on March 1 next following the general election at which it is approved by the voters.

Therefore, we are asking you to contact your district's State Senator and both of your Assembly people to support these resolutions by signing on as a Co-Sponsor of either SCR30 or ACR80, if they have not already done so

OTHER SUPPORTERS:

Over 90 organizations have signed on to pass a New Jersey Green Amendment. These include environmental organizations, community associations, churches, colleges, coalitions, commissions and small business owners.

For more information , see www.ForTheGenerations.org .

For the text of the resolutions and list of co-sponsors, see <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bills/BillView.asp>