



April 1, 2026

Attorney General William Tong  
165 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Via email: [Attorney.General@ct.gov](mailto:Attorney.General@ct.gov)

Dear Attorney General William Tong,

You have demonstrated tremendous leadership when it comes to environmental protection. Your unrelenting dedication to protecting our environment in the face of federal rollbacks and attacks advanced by the Trump Administration has earned you the immense respect, admiration and appreciation from the people of Connecticut who value a quality environment for ourselves, our family, friends, children and all the future generations who will benefit from - or be harmed by - the environmental actions taken today.

The Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment (CTERA) would add to our state constitution's Bill of Rights, a self-executing and enforceable right of all people in our state to clean and healthy air, water, soil, and a safe climate, and would ensure that the natural resources of our state are protected equitably for all people, and for both for present and future generations. With passage of the CTERA, our environmental rights would be given the same quality of protection as other cherished freedoms such as our rights to free speech and religion.

Three states already have in place environmental rights amendments on par with what We The People of Connecticut are seeking - i.e. provisions meeting the carefully crafted definition of a "Green Amendment": Pennsylvania, Montana and New York. Twenty more states from across our nation – including many with bi-partisan support – are proposing 'Green Amendments'.

### **How Has CTERA-like Language Been Implemented?**

In practice, these amendments have helped impacted communities, local governments, and state government officials address issues of serious and significant concern including protecting natural rivers, protecting drinking water, securing cleanup of long ignored toxic contamination, protecting remote ecosystems as well as urban green space, helping to address unchecked proliferation of fossil fuels, and empowering people and government to address the critical issue of climate change.

There has been no rush of legal action, and no state has experienced frivolous or nuisance lawsuits. Won or lost, every case pursued has been to address a significant issue of concern to the community. And in many instances it was the government who has been able to rely upon the amendment to support their legal position in court.

## **How Will the CTERA Benefit Connecticut?**

The CTERA, once secured, will strengthen our existing laws - not displace or dilute them – by ensuring they are interpreted and applied in a way that honors the constitutional rights of the people. To the extent existing laws are working well, the amendment will serve as silent support. But in those times when existing laws are not ensuring environmental rights are honored, the CTERA can provide a backstop and foundation for good government officials and impacted community members to ensure a constitutionally appropriate interpretation and application.

Notably, as we can see from the similar constitutional language that exists in 3 other states (Pennsylvania, Montana, New York), the CTERA will provide important legal value to the AG’s office in supporting, defending and advancing state and local government actions and decisions that are protective of the environment.

In fact, in Pennsylvania – the state with the longest existing Green Amendment – **the amendment has often been cited by the Attorney General’s office as providing foundational support for their efforts** to enforce existing environmental laws and making sure the courts do not allow for a weaker interpretation of the law than the attorney general would argue for.

## **Securing Our Place in History**

Around the world, international leaders recognize the inalienable, human right of all people to a clean, safe and healthy environment. And here in the U.S., Pennsylvania, Montana and New York have as well. There are also twenty states that are on the path of providing this critical recognition.

**We think Connecticut, with your support and leadership, could secure a crucial spot in history, leaving a legacy of protection** that will span all the generations yet to come.

**We want Connecticut to be the next state to recognize the RIGHT of its people** to a clean, safe and healthy environment, and to do so in a way that is meaningful and enforceable.

**We want Connecticut to be the FIRST state to recognize**, within its constitution, the right of the people to a safe climate system.

Ultimately, of course, support for the CTERA is about supporting the RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO DECIDE in a referendum whether WE want to amend our state constitution.

So, we close with the following by asking:

- a. Please support the CTERA language that community leaders have been asking for:

*Each person shall have an individual right to clean and healthy air, water, soil and ecosystems, a clean and healthy environment and a safe and stable climate for the benefit of public health, safety and the general welfare. The state shall protect these rights equitably for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, gender, socioeconomic status or geography. Recognizing all of the residents of the state, including present and future generations, as the beneficiaries of a healthy environment, the state shall conserve, manage, protect and maintain, for these beneficiaries, all of the natural resources of Connecticut, including its waters, air, flora, fauna, soils and climate. The state shall not allow, through government action or inaction, any degradation, diminution or depletion of the natural environment that is avoidable, contributes to significant or widespread environmental harm or results in an unhealthy or unsustainable environment. Any funds supporting protection of the*

*state's natural resources shall not be diverted. The rights stated in this section are equivalent to all other inalienable rights, may not be infringed and may be directly invoked and enforced by the residents of this state.*

Encourage legislators to advance and/or vote to advance the Resolution so the people of Connecticut are given the opportunity to decide whether we want constitutional environmental rights in our state's Bill of Rights, and have the final say in what WE want for our children, our future, future generations, and Connecticut.

Respectfully submitted,

*CT Environmental Rights Amendment Alliance,  
CT NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association of CT)  
Green Amendments For The Generations  
Portland Clean Energy Task Force  
League of Women Voters of Connecticut  
Hamden Alliance for Trees (HAT)  
Connecticut League of Conservation Voters  
Sunrise New Haven  
CT Third Act  
New Haven Climate Movement  
Sierra Club Connecticut  
CT Climate Crisis Mobilization (C3M)  
The Active Voice  
Windham-Willimantic NAACP  
Hamden Conservation Land Trust  
Quiet Corner Indivisible  
Norwalk River Watershed Association  
Pollinator Pathway  
Pollinator Pathway Stamford  
Climate Reality Project Southern CT Chapter  
Fairfield Forestry Committee  
Sustainable Fairfield  
CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG)  
Citizens' Climate Lobby – Connecticut  
People and Planet for Democracy  
People's Action for Clean Energy  
CT Food Sovereignty Collective  
New Haven Bioregional Group  
Nonprofit Accountability Group  
Clean Water Action Connecticut  
Connecticut Audubon Society  
Park Watershed  
CT Health Care Professionals for Climate Action  
CT Social Work Action Alliance  
Garden Club of Windham*