



## ***Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment Alliance***

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## **Connecticut Leaders Urge Attorney General Tong To Embrace Constitutional Environmental Rights For Connecticut**

**Hartford, CT;** 35 organizations representing residents and communities from across Connecticut sent Attorney General William Tong a letter, urging him to support adding the Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment (CTERA) to the State Constitution's Bill of Rights. After a robust hearing, the CTERA was passed out of the Government Administration and Elections Committee by a vote of 13 to 6 on Friday, March 20. After congratulating the Attorney General for his leadership role, the letter goes on to explain the many values for good governance the CTERA would bring to Connecticut environmental protection, including for the Attorney General's office. The letter includes a powerful message about Connecticut securing a place in history with the Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment:

“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.”

Read the full letter [here](#).

“Attorney General Tong, thank you for your leadership in fighting for civil rights and environmental protections when both have been so gravely undermined at the Federal level. Having seen how environmental protections we have relied upon for decades can be lost in a matter of months, it is more important than ever that we give the highest constitutional protection to environmental rights here in Connecticut by passing the CT Environmental Rights Amendment through the legislature and then through a referendum of the people,” **said Kimberly Stoner, Director of Advocacy, CT NOFA and Coordinator, CT Environmental Rights Amendment Alliance.**

“Constitutional environmental rights provisions, similar to that advancing in Connecticut, are making a meaningful difference for protecting the quality of the water, air and environment in the 3 states that have them, as well as helping ensure states do their part to address climate change by controlling climate changing emissions and protecting quality environments,” **explained Maya van Rossum, author of the book, *The Green Amendment* and founder of the [Green Amendments For The Generations](#) organization,** and also a member of the CTERA Alliance. “Adding the CTERA to the state constitution’s Bill of Rights would not only provide essential protections for communities harmed by high levels of environmental pollution and degradation, but it would empower good government officials across Connecticut, at both the local and the state level, as well as empowering the Attorney General himself, to proactively provide needed and essential protections where the law is falling short, rather than waiting until after the fact, when damage has already been done and too often cannot be reversed.”

“The mission of CT NOFA is to ensure the growth and viability of organic agriculture, organic food, and organic land care in Connecticut. But, if we don't have clean and healthy air, water, and especially soil in Connecticut, we will not be able to produce clean and healthy food and have a healthy and resilient environment, even with organic practices. If we don't have a safe climate, our farmers and land care professionals will have to deal with increasing extremes of weather and temperature, leading to climate disasters. CT NOFA congratulates the Government Administration and Elections Committee on passing SJ 37, the resolution to put the CT Environmental Rights Amendment on the ballot, and we look forward to seeing it pass in both chambers of the CT General Assembly,” **said Jeremy Pelletier, Executive Director of CT NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association of CT).**

“Sierra Club Connecticut applauds the work Attorney General Tong has done to protect our democracy and environment. At a time when environmental protections are being dismantled at the federal level, it is critical for states like Connecticut to lead. The Environmental Rights Amendment will strengthen our environmental laws and protect our air, water, and communities. Without a healthy environment, we cannot have a functioning democracy. We must do everything in our power to protect the place we call home. We call on Attorney General Tong to stand with the people of Connecticut and support the passage of S.J. 37,” **said Julianna Larue, Chapter Organizer Sierra Club Connecticut.**

“We, the future leaders of Connecticut, thank Attorney General Tong for all he is doing to protect the people of Connecticut against the Trump administration’s assaults against our environmental protections, including and especially by challenging the EPA’s unlawful rescission of the Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding. Now more than ever, we need strong legal protections against decisions that sacrifice our health and safety; we need a right to a clean and stable environment so that current and future generations can thrive. Continue to show the people of this state that you care about their health and safety by letting the people vote for an Environmental Rights Amendment,” **offers a spokesperson for Sunrise New Haven.**

“Attorney General Tong, you have been an exemplar of bravery and brilliance, someone we strive to emulate and to implore our children to do so as well. Please take the next audacious step for our grandchildren’s future,” **stated Susan Chapin with Citizens’ Climate Lobby - Connecticut.**

“At a time when environmental protections can feel uncertain, it is more important than ever for states like Connecticut to lead. Clean air, safe water, and a stable climate are fundamental to the health and well being of every community. The Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment offers an opportunity to affirm these as rights and

ensure they are protected for current and future generations. I encourage Attorney General Tong to play a constructive role in advancing this effort so the people of Connecticut have the opportunity to decide,” **said Mike Urgo- Founder, People for Planet and Democracy.**

“As someone who grew up on an island, I know what it means when the water is no longer clean or safe. Today, as State Director of Clean Water Action in Connecticut, I see how environmental protections directly impact public health. The Environmental Rights Amendment is a critical step forward, and we urge the Attorney General’s office to support the people’s right to vote on it,” **added Christine Bartlett-Josie, State Director, Clean Water Action.**

“We commend Attorney General Tong on his strong stand in defense of the environment. We encourage the passage of the Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment, S.J.37, as it will provide a legacy of environmental protections for future generations,” **said Joyce Leiz, Executive Director of The Connecticut Audubon Society.** “S.J. 37 will place Connecticut, once again, as a leader in protecting the rights of its people to a clean, safe, healthy environment.”

“Hamden Alliance for Trees calls on the Attorney General to Support SJ 37 the Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment. For the sake of our children’s future this amendment must be passed on to the voters of Connecticut for their rightful consideration,” **said Diane Hoffman on behalf of Hamden Alliance for Trees (HAT).**

“Attorney General Tong has been a champion of defending our human rights and civil rights. This is one more arena where he can show his support for the environmental rights of all our residents,” **stated Melinda Tuhus, Steering Committee, CT Climate Crisis Mobilization (C3M).**

“Third Act CT cares deeply about protecting the environment for future generations. We believe strongly that the CT ERA will ensure this protection,” **said Nancy Wright, Third Act CT Co-Facilitator.**

“Park Watershed heartily supports the Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment. Vibrant communities depend upon a healthy relationship with the nature in our neighborhoods. Aspirations to live within beautiful, clean communities has been an impetus for sprawl. Degradation of nature's ecosystem services spurs residents to move away. The Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment offers meaningful intent that will improve regional planning, as well as landscape and urban design,” **explained Mary Pelletier and Dr. Lisa E. Dahill of the Park Watershed community stewardship organization.**

“The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports passage of the ERA for the state. We believe that clean air, pure water, and a healthy environment are fundamental human rights to which we all are entitled,” **said Patricia Rossi, Co-President, League of Women Voters of Connecticut.**

“Enshrining environmental protections in our state constitution moves us from enacting piecemeal regulations year to year to taking a principled, moral stand that ensures we will protect Connecticut’s natural legacy for generations to come,” **added said Laura Smits, Co-President, League of Women Voters of Connecticut.**

[Green Amendments for the Generations \(GAFTG\)](#) has been working nationally since 2014 to help people understand, secure, and enforce constitutional environmental rights. According to GAFTG, the CTERA would be of the same kind and quality as constitutional provisions that currently exist in Pennsylvania, Montana, and New York, which have been used to secure clean drinking water, address air pollution, protect natural open space in remote and built areas, address climate pollution, and secure needed cleanup of toxic contamination. Similar amendments have been [proposed in over 20 other states](#).

To learn more: <https://www.ctenvironmentalrightsamendment.org/>

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