ACA 16 – The California Green Amendment

SUMMARY
ACA 16 will amend the State’s constitution to enshrine the right to clean air, water, and a healthy environment for every Californian.

BACKGROUND
For many years, California has led the nation in combating the effects of climate change. From statutorily protecting the right to affordable drinking water, to advancing statewide air quality and emissions standards, California continues to lead. However, despite all of these efforts, the California Constitution still has no permanent environmental language in it. In fact, many other states are ahead of California in their efforts to establish the right to a healthy environment for all of their residents. These “Green Amendments” are becoming commonplace for states seeking to further protect and affirm environmental rights.

Most recently, in 2021, the state of New York proposed to amend its constitution to add environmental language. With a resounding 70% of the public voting in support, it is clear that green amendments are both necessary and desired. To date, Nevada, New Mexico, Hawaii, Connecticut, Texas, Maine, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Washington all have introduced green amendment language.

PROBLEM
California is a leader in environmental policy. Our state sets a tone for the nation and often the world. Still, the 40 million people who call California home do not have a fundamental right to clean air, water, and a healthy environment. Without a constitutional right, all of the progress we have made is momentary and subject to potential rollbacks. It also leaves California increasingly vulnerable to changes in federal policy. If our state is to continue making equitable environmental progress, it is imperative that we join the growing list of states who have moved to enshrine environmental rights in their constitutions.

SOLUTION
ACA 16 will codify the right to clean air, water, and a healthy environment for every Californian. It will provide a foundation for the laws the legislature has fought to pass, and provide a permanent guidepost for our longevity and sustainability. Moreover, ACA 16 has the potential to ensure that 1 in 8 Americans has the fundamental and constitutionally protected right to clean air, water, and a healthy environment.

SUPPORT
Center for Biological Diversity (co-sponsor)
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (co-sponsor)
Community Water Center (co-sponsor)
Human Impact Partners (co-sponsor)
Green Amendments for the Generations (co-sponsor)
Climate Equity Policy Center (co-sponsor)
Sunrise Movement LA (co-sponsor)
1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations
350 Bay Area Action
350 Conejo/ San Fernando Valley
350 Sacramento
350 South Bay Los Angeles
350 Ventura County Climate Hub
Active San Gabriel Valley
Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Azul
Bay Area Youth Lobbying Initiative
California Association of Local Conservation Corps
California Coastal Protection Network
California Coastkeeper Alliance
California Environmental Justice Alliance Action
California Environmental Voters
California Green Business Network
California Nurses for Environmental Health and Justice
California Trout
Californians for Pesticide Reform
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
Central Valley Air Quality Coalition
Clean Water Action
CleanEarth4Kids.org
Climate Action California
Climate Health Now
Climate Plan
Climate Reality Project San Fernando Valley
Climate Reality Project, California Coalition
Climate Reality Project, LA Chapter
Climate Resolve
Coalition for Clean Air
Communities for a Better Environment
Culver City Democratic Club
Defenders of Wildlife
Democratic Socialists of America – Los Angeles
Dietrick Institute for Applied Insect Ecology
East Area Progressive Democrats
Environmental Defense Center
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Working Group
Families Advocating for Chemical and Toxics Safety
Families for A Future
Fossil Free California
Friends Committee on Legislation of California
Friends of the River
Glendale Environmental Coalition
Green Amendments for the Generations
JAIDE Conservation Collective, LLC
LA Waterkeeper
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Los Angeles City Councilmember Eunisses Hernández
Los Angeles City Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky
Los Angeles Unified School Board District 2, Dr. Rocio Rivas
Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California
Mono Lake Committee
MoveLA
Natural Resources Defense Council
NextGen CA
Pacifica Climate Committee
Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action
Pesticide Action Network
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Planning and Conservation League
Project Green Home
Public Health Institute
Sacramento Climate Coalition
Santa Cruz Climate Action
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
SCOPE LA
Sierra Club California
Sierra Nevada Alliance
Sonoma County Democratic Party
South Los Angeles Transit Empowerment Zone
Stand Together Against Neighborhood Drilling
Streets For All
Sunrise Movement Long Beach
Sunrise Movement Sacramento
Sunrise Movement San Diego
The Climate Center
The Nature Conservancy
Third Act SoCal
Transformative Wealth Management
Union of Concerned Scientists
Unite Here Local 11
Urban Environmentalists
USBC Los Angeles
Valley Improvement Projects
Vista Hermosa Heights Community Group
Vote Solar
West LA Democratic Club

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