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Environmental & Community Leaders Praise Legislators for Re-Proposing the New Mexico Green Amendment

Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico community and environmental leaders are applauding the proposal by legislators to amend the New Mexico Constitution to add enforceable environmental rights in the form of a New Mexico Green Amendment. This will be the third year that legislators have proposed such an amendment. In addition to maintaining adjustments to the language that occurred over the course of the 2022 legislative session, this year the pre-filed Green Amendment language has been strengthened by explicitly requiring equitable protection of environmental rights across communities regardless of race, ethnicity, tribal membership status, gender or geography.

It is anticipated that a growing number of legislators will join in supporting the amendment. By the end of the 2022 legislative session the New Mexico Green Amendment had 26 official House and Senate sponsors.

"Now more than ever, this amendment is important for current and future generations of New Mexicans." explained **Luis Guerrero, a Legislative and Political Organizer with the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter**. "As we continue to face the climate crisis and its effects on our ecosystems and health, all New Mexicans have the right to breathe clean air and drink clean water and thrive in a healthy environment. The Green Amendment is an important step toward that goal."

Eric Jantz, Senior Staff Attorney with the New Mexico Environmental Law Center explains, "The Green Amendment is a seismic shift in the way we protect the places where we live, work, play and pray. With the Green Amendment, low-income communities and communities of color that have historically been considered dumping grounds will have a way to ensure they have the same clean air, water and land that more politically powerful communities take for granted."

"New Mexico is on the leading edge of the national movement to recognize environmental rights as fundamental inalienable rights deserving the same highest protection that is currently given to speech, religious, civil and property rights," said **Maya van Rossum, author of the book The Green Amendment and founder of the organization [Green Amendments For The Generations](#)** seeking to advance constitutional environmental rights nationally. "As it is written, the New Mexico Green Amendment will ensure government officials are protecting environmental rights and natural resources equitably across the state's communities and that it is making informed decisions focused on protecting environmental rights from the beginning of the decision-making process when protection is best accomplished. Contrary to what others might suggest, this constitutional recognition is not designed to harm any industry, it is intended to protect the environment for all people and simply to ensure that businesses operate as good members of the communities where they too reside. The fact is, when we protect the environment we enhance public health, economic growth, and our cherished natural resources."

Sr. Joan Brown, osf, Executive Director of New Mexico & El Paso Interfaith Power and Light believes that, "as people of diverse religions and spiritual paths, caring for our sacred land, water, air, climate and communities is part of our call to love our neighbor and do justice. The Green Amendment is an important tool that holds ethical and moral values that can assist in our work of climate justice and love in action for future generations."

"New Mexicans deserve a constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment.", declared **Lora Lucero, with the Progressive Democrats of America - Central New Mexico**. "Progressive Democrats of America (PDA-CNM) supports the NM Green Amendment because it's so integrally tied to our quality of life, and the future we want our children to inherit."

"I strongly believe that there is much that can be done by state government agents as trustees of the natural resources of New Mexico in areas that call out for support of clean air and water, such as the Carlsbad, Chaco area and the South Valley of Albuquerque. With passage of the proposed Green Amendment, officials will be constitutionally obligated to conserve, protect, and maintain our natural resources," said **Linda Starr, Co-leader, Rio Grande Valley Broadband of Great Old Broads for Wilderness**.

"For too long our right to a clean environment has been denied, violated, or forgotten by all levels of government. This past year in the South Valley, Congressional District 2, I found myself throughout my pregnancy in packed, unmasked rooms, on Zooms, all over like a 'whack-a-mole' fighting for my child's right to clean air, water, soil, and a healthy environment. I fought to gather the oxygen out for simple public comment because my burnt esophagus paired with my daughter sitting on my lungs. I'm currently sitting, battling, unable to hold my daughter for long periods because I literally cannot breathe while holding her too long upright. Can you imagine not holding your newborn? I live the consequences of unchecked governance putting my body around environmental toxins for all the wrong reasons. I refuse to let my daughter suffer this same fate simply for existing. My entire view of environmental justice, advocacy for the environment, and desire to fight the good fight for Mother Earth had lifted 100-fold. I'm demanding a right to vote on a Constitutional Amendment. For my daughter and future generations— pass The Green Amendment!" declared **Nicole Maestas-Olonovich, first-time-mother, MSW, MBA, OIF Veteran, CD-2 Chair DPNM Environmental Justice Caucus**.

Currently, constitutional Green Amendments exist in Pennsylvania, Montana, and New York. In addition to New Mexico, constitutional environmental rights amendments are being advanced in Washington, New Jersey, Hawaii, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Florida, among other states.

Once the amendment receives a majority vote of support from each of the legislative houses, it will be placed before the people of New Mexico on the 2023 ballot.

For more information: www.NMGreenAmendment.org.

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