

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Inspiring A New Era of
**CONSTITUTIONAL
ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS**

Through the Passage of
**GREEN AMENDMENTS
NATIONWIDE**

Leading the way to a brighter future



GREEN AMENDMENTS FOR THE GENERATIONS
2024 ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Regardless of Politics, Green Amendments Protect Us

2024 ended with quite a shock when federal elections swept into power a slate of politicians bent on removing a system of basic environmental

protections that took decades to build. Because of this, the future of protecting our environment and addressing the climate crisis at the federal level has come into question.

While our new political reality has highlighted the need for state-level constitutional Green Amendment protections, it did not unilaterally create that need. For decades, our current U.S. system has been failing to ensure the level of protection necessary, allowing water, air, soils and ecosystems to be devastatingly polluted and harmed in ways that undermines every aspect of our lives and our communities — from the health of our children and families; the fundamental undermining of the environmental essentials required for stable and healthy economic development; to the loss of the wildlife, plant life, and environments that enrich our lives educationally, recreationally, intellectually, psychologically and beyond.

While the prospect of a wholesale rollback of federal environmental protections has highlighted, for many, the need to turn back to the states in a way that secures meaningful and widespread reform – in truth, the need for Green Amendment protections pre-existed the outcome of the federal elections. Pursuing Green Amendments in every state constitution has and always will be a powerful way to defend ourselves and our environment, even when those in federal positions of power seek to strip away basic and essential environmental protections many of us have worked decades to secure. Green Amendments will not only defend the healthy environments we still have, but they will raise the bar on environmental protection, and create a lasting legacy of protection which, once secured, is unlikely to ever be lost.

Green Amendments raise the bar on environmental protection across all environmental issues. While environmental laws and regulations focus on one limited aspect of the environment – addressing one aspect of air, water or toxic contamination; protecting one species and generally only those that are already in trouble; protecting one kind of ecosystem from specific kinds of harm – a constitutional Green Amendment puts in place higher protections for all aspects of the environment.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

And Green Amendments give every day people real power to protect their environmental rights when those in government would seek to undermine them or even strip them away.

While we face the real peril that at the federal level environmental protections will be stripped away – one by one – at the state level we can use our democratic and constitutional right to amend our state constitutions to put in place stronger, overarching, and enduring legacy protections that cannot be stripped away when the winds of politics change.

Green Amendments provide legacy protection for our environment. Laws and regulations can be passed and repealed quite easily, depending on the political winds of the moment. The same is not true for constitutional Green Amendment protections. A constitutional amendment may take more work to secure – but once we get it, it's ours and cannot be lightly stripped away. And as we carry forth the conversations to educate and advocate for Green Amendment protections we are helping others to understand that not only is environmental protection essential to all aspects of modern lives and society, but we are helping people to understand that they have real power to make progress when it comes to protecting our water, air, biodiversity, soils, environment and for addressing the climate crisis.

If you are in a state yet to benefit from a Green Amendment, we are enjoying and/or looking forward to working with you to secure one. If you are in one of the three states that has a Green Amendment, we look forward to working with you to enforce it. **Thank you for being part of the Green Amendment movement.**

**With Appreciation & Gratitude,
Smiling,**

**Maya K. van Rossum
Founder, Leader, &
“Mother” of the Green Amendment Movement**



TEN YEARS OF GROWING SUCCESS: AN OVERVIEW

While clean water and air, a safe climate and healthy environment are recognized as essential, inalienable, human rights, without the strongest constitutional protections upholding them, they are generally and legally ignored by our government. When the Green Amendments For the Generations (GAFTG) movement began, the idea of constitutional recognition of the fundamental right to a clean, safe and healthy environment and climate was largely unheard of and not given credence in U.S. environmental or legal circles. But after a decade of advocating for this highest protection and demonstrating its value in legal and environmental activism, the need for what we coined “Green Amendments” is increasingly recognized as essential to making meaningful strides in environmental protection, environmental justice, and climate justice.

In 2014, when our movement was conceived as a direct result of a foundational legal victory our founder led the way to secure, only two states included in their constitutions the essential protections that Green Amendments provide for the inalienable right of all people to clean air and water, a safe climate and healthy environments. Ten short years later, **by the end of 2024:**

- **New York has become the 3rd state in the country with a Green Amendment,**
- **Green Amendments have been proposed in 19 states, and**
- **Another eight states have been inspired to organize & advance their own Green Amendment proposal.**

This means that **in just 10 years, over 50% of U.S. states are now part of our Green Amendments For The Generations movement.**

Our progress over just the year 2024 is inspiring.

State by State & Nationwide, Green Amendments Use The Most Powerful Tool Available – at the state and federal levels – For Securing Environmental Protection & Justice

Under U.S. law the federal government has power, but so too do the states. While the federal government puts in place a base of protection that all states must meet when it comes to the environment, state governments have the authority to put in place stronger protections. And that is what a Green Amendment does. A Green Amendment puts in place higher protections that must benefit all communities across the state and all generations, including those yet to be born.



- Green Amendments Passed
- Green Amendments Proposed
- Green Amendments Organizing/Interest

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GAFTG AS BOTH LEADER & PARTNER

As the founder of this movement and the only national organization doing this work since 2014, communities in over 20 states have requested our leadership and partnership to help them work towards Green Amendment success. Reflecting a core organizational value, our involvement within a state is always in response to requests for support. We do not push our vision for Green Amendments onto any community, we simply share the concept and offer to help when or if they decide a Green Amendment is right for them.

In addition, Green Amendments For The Generations respects that every state has a distinct history, personality and coalition of communities and organizations that must be reflected in their Green Amendment language, strategy, and leadership in order for inclusive, people-powered success. We prioritize helping communities reflect this uniqueness in their Green Amendment language, education materials, and advocacy.

Green Amendments For The Generations' extensive **partnerships include over 400 organizations and community groups** representing an intersectional population of environmental, youth, BIPOC, and faith-based perspectives. In addition, **GAFTG's membership includes over 6,400 individuals** nationwide. Working with Green Amendments For The Generations, coalition partners lead and/or participate in their state steering committees, design and lead public trainings, engage in direct outreach, and act as leading spokespersons for their state GA efforts.



GREEN AMENDMENTS AS A LYNCHPIN FOR ADVOCACY AND LEGAL SUCCESS

Green Amendments, once secured, are helping communities achieve otherwise unachievable successes. Just as GAFTG acts as essential educator, expert, and partner in states where Green Amendments are being sought, we are also helping to **advance and support effective advocacy and legal use of Green Amendments to protect people's health and safety** by protecting the quality of their air, water, soils, groundwater, environment and climate.

The presence of constitutional Green Amendments within a state is proving to be a lynchpin for protecting ecosystems and communities in a multitude of situations. Green Amendments For The Generations is working to support essential, precedent setting legal actions, including by offering legal and strategic input, providing amicus brief support, and helping to direct press and community attention to lift up the work.

Legal successes secured in 2024 demonstrate the power of Green Amendment protections.

In Montana, the Green Amendment is:

- The foundation for *Held v. Montana*, the iconic youth climate legal action led by Our Children's Trust, in which the Montana State government is being held accountable to address the climate crisis by 16 youth plaintiffs from all walks of life. In 2024, the Montana Supreme Court affirmed that the Montana Green Amendment right of the people to a "clean and healthful" environment includes the right to a safe climate.



Youth Plaintiffs Gather Outside Courthouse For the Historic Week Long Trial. GAFTG was present in the courthouse to cheer on the Youth and their legal team.

LEGAL SUCCESSES CONTINUED

In Pennsylvania, the Green Amendment is:

- Advancing important precedent in the climate space, giving impacted communities the constitutional standing they need to challenge the state's failure to meaningfully address climate changing emissions. Green Amendments For The Generations provided a valuable amicus brief that is helping support the community plaintiff's legal posture while at the same time informing the proper interpretation of Pennsylvania's Green Amendment language. The case has once again demonstrated the unparalleled value of having a constitutional environmental right that meets the definition of a "Green Amendment" for people impacted by pollution and the climate crisis.
- Securing never-before-seen legal environmental rights. On July 19, 2024, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that Pennsylvanians harmed by climate changing air pollution, and the heat, flooding, and other weather related impacts of the climate crisis, have a right to intervene in a key climate case and to put forth arguments asserting their constitutional environmental rights, including arguing the state has a constitutional obligation to meaningfully addresses climate change. In the absence of the Pennsylvania Green Amendment, the environmental organizations and their members may not have had the legal foundation necessary to intervene in this landmark legal action.
- Helping a frontline community legally challenge a state agency's decision to not only allow continued operation of a coal-fired power plant, but to allow for its expansion – solely for the purpose of supporting the for-profit goals of a Bitcoin operation – while providing no benefit to the impacted community.
- Underpinning community advocacy that utilities must take meaningful action to invest in clean energy progress over fossil fuels.



Power Interfaith rallies and testifies outside of a PECO hearing in 2024.

LEGAL SUCCESSES CONTINUED

In New York, the 2-year-old Green Amendment is:

- Helping communities, including environmental justice communities, communities of color, and low income communities, to stop illegal air pollution – including air pollutants known to cause irreversible lung damage, COPD, kidney disease, autoimmune disorders, cardiovascular impairment, cerebrovascular incidents, and lung cancer – that is being emitted by the actions of Norlite Industries that the state has failed to meaningfully address, with Green Amendments For The Generations offering legal input and helping to lift up the work in the news and advocacy space.
- Being used by communities overwhelmed by nearly paralyzing levels of air pollution, stench and greenhouse gases emanating from massive and expanding landfills, with Green Amendments For The Generations offering legal input, a supporting amicus brief, and helping to advance a call for meaningful state action in the advocacy space.
- Still new. By year's end, New York saw some pretty shocking and harmful decisions out of the courts but Green Amendments For The Generations is working with our allies to take on the challenge and to defeat this bad precedent – just as we successfully did in Pennsylvania where our Founder defeated over 40 years of bad precedent on the state Green Amendment and effectively used the constitutional language to defeat pro-fracking/pro-fossil fuel legislation.



Seneca Lake Guardian Leads Press Event & Rally to demand their RIGHT to Clean Air & a Healthful Environment.

Learn about these and more legal victories here:
forthe generations.org/resources/legal-resources/

GROWING OUR LEGAL PROGRAM IS AN ESSENTIAL GOAL

Green Amendments For The Generations' unique role in founding and advancing Green Amendments in and out of the courtroom has proven invaluable to many communities on the front lines. We would like to grow the legal support we can offer.

Our goal is to have in-house legal and support staffing so we can serve the growing need for our support and expertise. Through the legal program, we can help advance the legal research, filings, and expert engagement needed to take on the opposition and help communities become their own best expert advocates.

Please make a donation today, so we can help communities on the frontlines access the legal resources they need to vindicate their constitutional Green Amendment rights.

WANT TO DONATE IN SUPPORT?

VISIT

bit.ly/GAFTGDonateNow



NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024



2 great movie screenings in Michigan & New Jersey featuring ***Here's The Story: The Green Amendment*** to help communities understand and engage in their state Green Amendment efforts.

4 states – Michigan, Wisconsin, Oregon and California – transitioned from states purely focused on general Green Amendment education, organizing and messaging to states where legislators had – in response to the activism – formally proposed Green Amendment language.



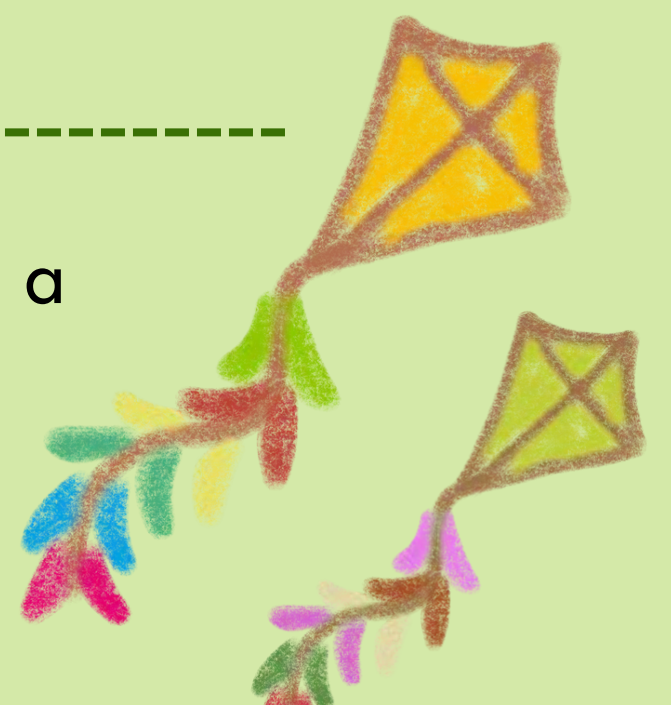
5 live press events and hearings in Washington, New Mexico, Connecticut, New Jersey & Hawaii all benefited from van Rossum being asked to speak as the national expert on the values of Green Amendments, and the impacts of their implementation in the 3 states that have already secured one.

After 6 years, New Jersey advocates secured a Senate committee hearing & vote. Green Amendments For The Generations Founder M. van Rossum was asked - much to the surprise of everyone present, including Maya herself - to spontaneously debate the leading voice of the industry opposition. By all accounts, Maya trounced the points of the opposition and by the end of the debate had solidly secured the majority committee vote needed. Watch the debate [here](#).



7 new states have sought to join the movement, including Rhode Island, Minnesota, Nebraska, Georgia, North Carolina, Illinois and New Hampshire. As the year has progressed, Nebraska and Rhode Island advanced most quickly with a strong outlook for 2025.

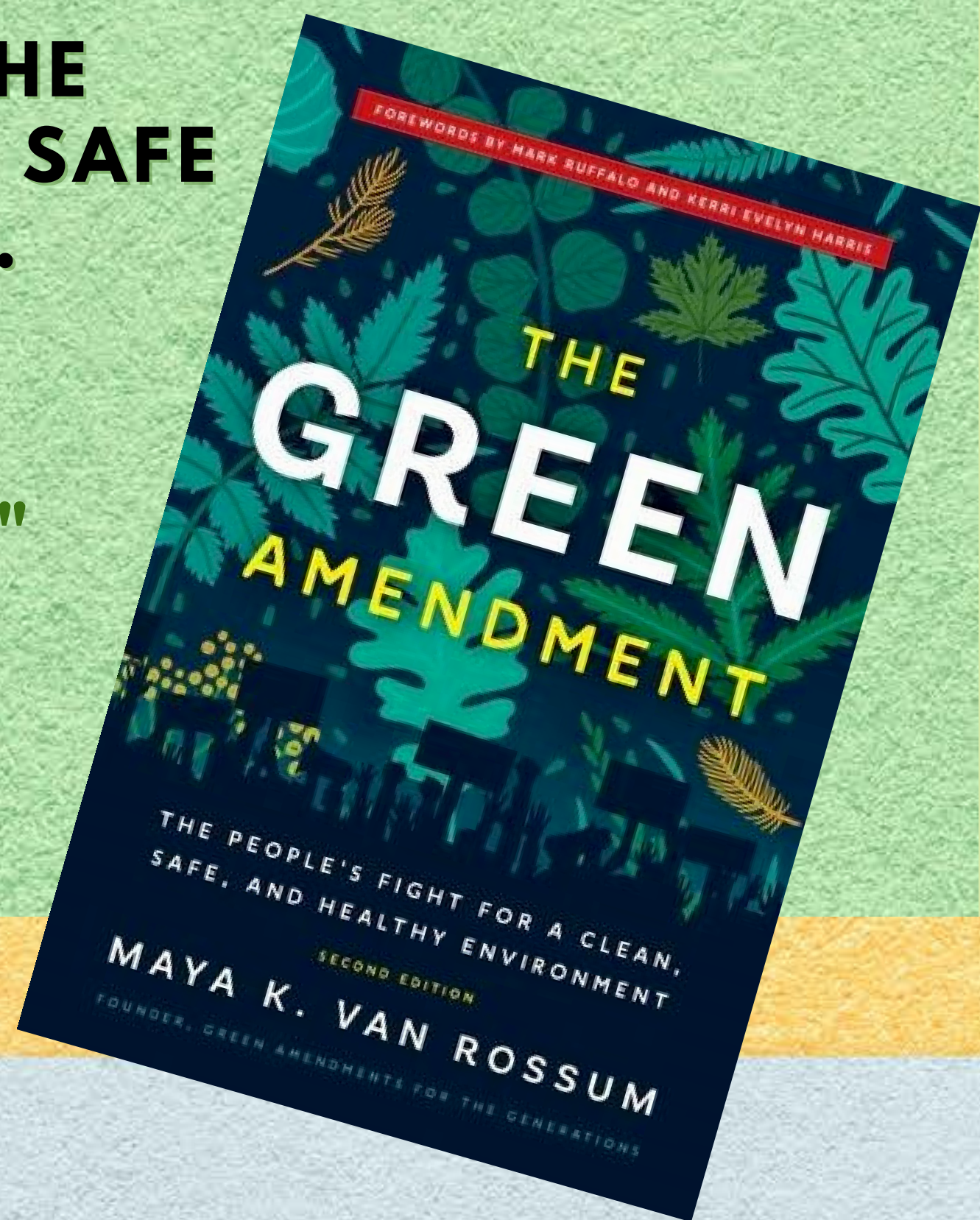
Use of our [Green Amendment Action Platform](#) continued to grow as a safe space for quality information and opportunities to engage with Green Amendment advocates nationwide.



THE BOOK THAT HELPED TO START IT ALL

THE GREEN AMENDMENT, THE PEOPLE'S FIGHT FOR A CLEAN, SAFE & HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.

**Have you gotten your copy?
Use Code “AnnualReport2024”
to get a copy for the special
price of \$14!**



From one kind reader:

Dear Maya,

“I hope you and your family have been enjoying the holiday season - I just wanted to say that I asked for (and got) a copy of your The Green Amendment book and I love it! It is excellent - brilliantly written and framed - but also sobering and even infuriating in parts.

I will be recommending it to my fellow advocates and family members and friends as well, and I definitely think it should be required reading for all science and law students. I also hope to see such an amendment up here in Canada, in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, before I leave this Earth.

HÍSKWE (thank you) again for all the critical work that you do
and take care,”

David Pedersen (@FedUpWithBadAir on social media)

NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024



Over the course of 2024, GAFTG provided 27 talks to audiences in 10 states and to 3 national audiences with attendance topping 2,700 individuals.

Green Amendments For The Generations has created state-specific websites or web pages for every active state (30 in total) to provide state-specific education and informational resources with 2024 additions including full, robust websites created for Michigan and Nebraska, two emerging leaders in the national Green Amendment movement.



Green Amendments For The Generations announced a new Green Amendment Ambassador program to further strengthen local leadership in educating and advocating around the values of state Green Amendment protections – by year's end 63 individuals from 12 different states had signed up to be Green Amendment Ambassadors.

Through an engaging interview with our Founder, Green Amendments For The Generations was featured by students seeking to tell the story of the landmark *Held v. Montana* case. The resulting documentary was submitted to CSPAN as part of a video contest, and the Maryland high school students received an honorable mention for their work.



We launched our new Guardian Gnome campaign to support people in their environmental protection journey by offering a weekly Gnome-spiration (recommendation) for action and a bit of fun with the find the gnome game. Sign up at www.GuardianGnome.org.

OUR COMMUNITIES CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER & THE POWER OF GREEN AMENDMENT PROTECTIONS



**20 VOLUNTEERS
325 HOURS
5,364 LETTERS
\$44,511 IN SUPPORT**



When it came time for our fall and year-end donation campaigns, 20 volunteers gathered over the course of over 325 hours to add personal notes of gratitude on 5,364 letters sent to all those who had signed up as members of our organization. In addition, even more support was inspired by a cookie bake sale of one dedicated young person, and two generous supporters offering challenge grants in honor of Larry Stauffer (you can learn about Larry at [LiveLikeLarry.org](https://www.LiveLikeLarry.org)) and as part of one company's 1% For The Planet annual donation. Thanks to the generosity of our donors which was inspired, no doubt, by this dedicated team of volunteers, our year end campaign raised \$44,511, allowing us to start 2025 off on a strong foundation.



NATIONAL GREEN AMENDMENT DAY 2024 DEMANDING OUR RIGHTS



National Green Amendment Day 2024 focused on supporting the New York amendment and challenging state leaders to embrace the environmental protection the NY Green Amendment provides. The Green Amendment Day rally brought together diverse and leading voices from across the state, along with a letter signed by 68 organizations and a constitutional amendment poster that were hand delivered to the Governor's office, the Attorney General's Office and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. While the rally was primarily focused on New York, the messaging was broadly inspirational on the value of constitutional protection for environmental rights.

Check out the recap video [here](#).



PATHWAYS FOR ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED TO GROW IN 2024



GAFTG was invited by our key partner, the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators, to talk with legislators from across the nation about the transformational power of the Green Amendment movement. Legislative leaders from coast to coast joined to learn about, talk about, and strategize about the advancement of Green Amendment protections nationwide and in their states. 19 representatives representing 11 states joined the training and the movement.

Green Amendments For The Generations was featured on the newly released [Earth Law Portal](#), created and hosted by the Earth Law Center. The platform is focused on transforming ideas into action for protecting our earth, and serving as a “digital portal and repository of Earth Law legal models and templates”, and “a place where legislators, activists, and others can customize and download Earth laws—much like other law template sites, but for the planet!” In 2024 the Earth Law Center asked to feature the Green Amendments movement among their models, including hosting a special [Green Amendments video](#) and some of our materials.



Green Amendments For The Generations was invited to be a member of the Blue Planet Alliance that is working worldwide to empower people, communities, islands, and nations to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2045. During New York City’s Climate Week, GAFTG was highlighted as a special guest to sign the [Blue Plant Alliance MOU & Pledge](#), and to speak before an international audience about the importance and values of Green Amendment protections for addressing the climate crisis and advancing environmental justice.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIP IS KEY TO OUR SUCCESS



Green Amendments For The Generations joined with our partners at many special press, speaking and educational events to help spread the word and offer our unique perspective and expertise to the conversation - such as joining with our Connecticut partners and legislative champions at a special press event held to highlight the values of the CT amendment soon to be the subject of an empowering hearing before the CT Committee on Government Affairs and Elections.

Lifting up and supporting local leadership is key to our Green Amendment success. We have so many stories of individuals taking the leadership reins and inspiring amazing progress – people like David Kipnis and Monica Aufrecht in Washington; Kimberly Stoner in Connecticut; Sherry Pollack and Dave Mulinix in Hawaii; Gloria Koch and Chris Barsy-Eckman in Michigan; Michelle Henkin and Andy Burt in Maine, Rachel Dawn Davis, Lindsey Kayman, and Ellie Gruber in New Jersey; David Steele, Glenn Griffin, Lora Lucero, and Linda Starr in New Mexico; Mel Martin and Linda Perrine in Oregon; George Faucher and Don Hermes in Rhode Island; Sheridan Macy in Nebraska; Joseph Bonasia in Florida; Micah Perlin in California, and so many others too numerous to mention.

Among our greatest joys is to witness these leaders in action. Here is just one example– Gloria Koch speaks at a local community event and really hits the message home.

Watch the video [here](#).



GREEN AMENDMENTS MINI-GRANTS SUPPORT AMAZING ENGAGEMENT

Through the generous support of a caring philanthropist, Green Amendments For The Generations was once again able to offer mini-grants to support active and creative engagement across the movement. The Green Amendments Mini-Grants program continued to provide a boost to individuals and organizations wanting to engage but who needed a little boost of help. Because of this program:

- A New Mexico mother was able to pay for the costs of travel, childcare and what would have been a missed day's pay from work in order to go to her state capitol to engage around New Mexico's Green Amendment proposal.
- Michigan's Green Amendment coalition was able to hire a local artist to create original artwork to support their efforts; held a Green Amendment Movie & Education event to expand their coalition of support and leadership, including securing food from local small businesses; covered the registration fee for several tabling events; and secured support for bi-lingual educational door hangers to help volunteers spread the word within their communities.
- The Parents Engaging Parents (PEPNJ), secured support for their "Voices Unity: A Day of Advocacy, Music, and Community" which included Green Amendment educational programming and materials.
- Connecticut's mini-grant support allowed 5 members to attend a special Clean Energy Conference, including covering the costs of registration, childcare and missed work.
- In New York the program supported costs associated with a rally at the Capitol; along with a special poster, materials, speaker honorariums; the costs of travel, food and childcare for a number of participants who needed the support in order to attend with children; and thanks to the program several families were able to cover their costs of travel and food for the children so they could experience the values of positive civic engagement.
- Nebraska's mini-grant supported the costs of their state-specific website.
- New Mexico's coalition sponsored a special education event to help people learn and engage with one another around their state's Green Amendment.
- A special multi-state grant is providing support for media outreach to lift up Green Amendment efforts in key leading states.



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS



GREEN AMENDMENTS[®]
FOR THE GENERATIONS
Pure Water. Clean Air. Healthy Environment.

Securing a Constitutional Right to Pure Water, Clean Air, a Stable Climate & Healthy Environments, For All People, Including Future Generations, Regardless of Race, Ethnicity, or Socioeconomics.

Support our work and join the movement!

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