



## For Immediate Release

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## Unanimous Vote for Hawaii Constitutional Environmental Rights

**Honolulu, Hawai'i:** The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment voted unanimously to advance the Hawai'i Green Amendment. The proposal would amend the state constitution's Bill of Rights to recognize and protect the inalienable human right of Hawai'i's people, including future generations, to clean water and air, a healthful environment and climate, and healthy native ecosystems and beaches. The proposed amendment, titled Environmental Rights, ([SB2478](#)) passed with unanimous support of the committee (3 ayes, 1 aye with reservations, 0 no, 1 excused).

Explains **Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder of 350Hawaii**, “The Hawai'i Green Amendment is about a shift from merely managing pollution after it occurs, think Red Hill, to proactively avoiding environmental harm. It is also about the people of Hawai'i providing a guideline for our government and ensuring they are putting in place laws that prioritize and ensure environmentally sustainable development. Decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. That is the essence of what having a Hawai'i Green Amendment will do and why it is so important that we pass it. I want to MAHALO the AEN Committee for their decision on SB2478, which, in the final analysis, is not about a vote to amend our state constitution, but is instead a vote to let the people of Hawai'i decide if we want to amend our state constitution.”

“The Hawai'i attorney general is correct” says **Maya van Rossum, Founder of the Green Amendments For The Generations movement** which is working with communities nationwide to secure constitutional environmental rights that meet the Green Amendment definition. “The proposed Hawai'i Green Amendment *will* broaden existing environmental rights for the people of Hawai'i. The HI Green Amendment will strengthen existing environmental protections, and will offer state and county government, and the people of Hawai'i a pathway to secure needed environmental protections when and where they are needed because the laws as written, interpreted or applied have not ensured essential protections. Where existing laws are strong enough, the HI Green Amendment will stand as strong support.”

“What good is ‘freedom of speech’ if the air we breathe is polluted? Nothing is more important than having clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment and climate. We need a Green Amendment!” exclaims **Dave Mulinix from Greenpeace Hawaii**.

According to the organization [Green Amendments For The Generations](#), constitutional Green Amendments currently exist in Pennsylvania, Montana and New York. An additional 20 states are pursuing similar constitutional environmental rights provisions.

Lead sponsors of the Hawai'i Green Amendment are: HI Senators Gabbard, Rhoads, Fukunaga and Moriwaki on the Senate side and in the House are HI Representatives Poepoe, Amato, Belatti, Grandinetti, Hussey, Ilagan, Iwamoto, Kahaloa, Kusch, Marten, Perruso and Olds.

M. van Rossum adds, “While the Hawai'i state constitution is already clear that the state is the trustee of the natural resources of the state to be protected for present and future generations, and that the people of the state have a right to seek to enforce existing state environmental protections, the constitution does not yet recognize a clean, safe and healthy environment as a right of the people. The right to enforce existing laws is very different than a self-executing and enforceable right to a healthy environment. The people of Hawai'i deserve to have their inalienable human rights to a healthy environment and climate protected with the same legal vigor as other rights, such as the right to free speech. That is what the Hawai'i Green Amendment does.”

- ⇒ To learn more about the Hawaii Green Amendment: [www.HIGreenAmendment.org](http://www.HIGreenAmendment.org)
- ⇒ To learn more about the national Green Amendments For The Generations movement: [www.GreenAmendment.org](http://www.GreenAmendment.org)

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