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## **Hawai'i Senate Committee Votes to Pass a Hawaii Green Amendment; Adding Individual Environmental Rights to the State Bill of Rights**

**Honolulu, Hawai'i** – After the first hearing for state senators to consider whether to amend the state's constitution to include environmental rights, on February 9, the Hawai'i Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment voted unanimously in favor of adding an Environmental Rights Amendment (also known as the Hawai'i Green Amendment SB2933) to the state constitution's Bill of Rights. The amendment, as proposed, would create an enforceable individual right for all people of the state, including future generations to: "clean water and air, a healthful environment and climate, healthy native ecosystems, and beaches".

"Our environment is part of who we are here in Hawai'i. It nurtures every part of us—our health, the joy we feel being in nature, at the beach, or hiking in the mountains. Hawai'i's environment is fundamental to a healthy economy and stable workforce," said **lead sponsor Senator Mike Gabbard**. "Sadly, the Maui wildfires and Red Hill fuel leaks brought home the fact that when we damage our environment, we damage the people. Likewise, when we nurture our environment, we nurture the people. I'm pleased we passed [Senate Bill 2933](#) out of my committee, and hope to see it pass out of the next committees and ultimately become law. The proposed Hawai'i Constitutional Green Amendment ensures that when we take environmentally-related action as government officials in Hawai'i, both our environment and our people will be protected."

"As an island community, our health and future is inextricably tied to the health of our natural resources. A Green Amendment is an important step towards ensuring the protection of our local environment. It's a win-win for our community and our environment," said **Lauren Blickley, Hawai'i Regional Manager for the Surfrider organization**.

"Hawai'i 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** that has

been working since 2014 to inspire constitutional environmental rights nationally. "If Hawai'i passes this amendment through the process it will be the fourth state in the nation to provide this much needed, highest constitutional protection, and it will be a valuable addition to the already strong natural resources protection the Hawai'i constitution currently provides," added van Rossum. Currently Pennsylvania, Montana and New York are the only 3 states that have Green Amendment language in their state constitutions.

"Decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. That is the essence of what having a Green Amendment would do and why it is so important that we pass it. I want to Mahalo the AEN Committee for their decision today on SB2933!" said **Sherry Pollack with 350 Hawai'i**.

"As the climate crisis gets worse and worse, it is ever more important to ensure that we are protecting the rights of every person to enjoy clean water and air. Many people in Hawai'i currently do not have access to a clean environment...what kind of paradise is Hawai'i if we can't even legally guarantee this right? For the sake of our futures, we are counting on the Green Amendment's passage," stated **Dyson Chee, Club Network Director with The Hawai'i Youth Climate Coalition**.

"It seems ludicrous that our constitution gives us the right to own a gun but we don't have a right to a clean and healthful environment. What is more important than having clean air, clean water, and a healthy climate? We need a Hawai'i Green Amendment!" offered **Dave Mulinix with Greenpeace Hawai'i**.

According to advocates, the newly created environmental right will be a helpful compliment to the natural resource protections already included in the state's constitution found in Article XI, Section 1, and the environment rights legislative mandates found in Article XI, Section 9.

The next committees to hear the proposal will be the Senate Committee on Judiciary and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

Green Amendments For The Generations, the founding organization for the national movement, is currently working in over 15 states seeking to advance Green Amendment protections. Currently three states have Green Amendments ([as the term is defined](#) by Green Amendments For The Generations): Pennsylvania, Montana and New York. If passed, Hawaii could be the 4<sup>th</sup> state with a Green Amendment.

To learn more about the Hawai'i Green Amendment proposal visit: [www.HIGreenAmendment.org](http://www.HIGreenAmendment.org).

To learn more about the national Green Amendment movement, visit [www.ForTheGenerations.org](http://www.ForTheGenerations.org).

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