

For Immediate Release

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Delaware Green Amendment Gains Traction in First Public Hearing

Dover, DE: Today, the Delaware House Administration Committee concluded a second day of hearings regarding HB220, also known as the Delaware Green Amendment. After 2 hours of testimony over two days, including testimony by national Green Amendment expert Maya van Rossum, the committee tabled consideration of the bill until a future date to be determined. On April 28, 2022, State Rep. Madinah Wilson-Anton and State Sen. Stephanie Hansen proposed adding the Delaware Green Amendment to the state constitution. The companion proposals in the House and the Senate propose amending the Delaware State Constitution's Bill of Rights in order to recognize the rights of present and future generations "to a clean and healthy environment, including water, air, soil, flora, fauna, ecosystems and climate, and to the preservation of the natural, cultural, scenic and healthful qualities of the environment".

Delaware environmental leaders, activists, and residents applauded the proposal as providing a much needed level of environmental protection and justice in the state.

"Over these past 2 days, Delawareans spoke passionately about how and why constitutional protection of environmental rights is so important for the state. Testimony included stories about people and families suffering cancer, body sores, and other impacts due to pollution exposure. We heard about operations in the state where pollution is rampant and there has been little to no action to address the situation under current law. The testimony was emotional and powerful," said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and Founder of Green Amendments For The Generations.** " "Providing constitutional protection to the rights of all Delawareans to clean water and air, a stable climate and healthy environments is not controversial, it is common sense. While we are disappointed that the Committee did not vote to move the Delaware Green Amendment along in the process, we are looking forward to another opportunity for the bill to be heard and successfully passed," van Rossum added.

Maria Payan, co-founder of Sussex Health & Environmental Network, stated, “Clean water is vital to the life of every Delawarean. It is essential for a healthy economy, for future generations, for every business, every farm, and Delaware’s economy. For decades, we have struggled with water quality. It is simply not acceptable that Delaware leads the entire nation in the highest percentage (97%) of our rivers and streams are polluted. It is unacceptable that we have children who cannot bathe in clean water. We have too many neighbors having repeated miscarriages and birth defects. Clean water is not a red or blue issue-it is all Delawareans' issue. We made that clear today.”

Kerri Evelyn Harris, Executive Director of Opportunity Knocks for Delaware and Program Advisor for MidAtlantic Justice Coalition, stated, “Although HB220 was tabled today, it is vital to our state’s economic and public health that we continue to fight to pass this bill. Our natural resources need to be protected in order to protect our economy, our precious farmlands, and the health of every Delawarean. If we believe clean air and water is a human right, we should include it in our constitution alongside the other rights we hold in such high regard such as free speech and freedom of religion.”

If the bill passes through the state legislature by a two-thirds majority vote from each legislative house in two consecutive General Assemblies, the state constitution’s Bill of Rights would be amended to add enforceable environmental rights protections for all Delawareans. As of June 16, 2022, the Delaware Green Amendment has gained the support of 17 co-sponsors, 19 organizations, and numerous residents.

To learn more about the Delaware Green Amendment movement, visit

www.DEGreenAmendment.org

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