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Youth Leaders Rally For Their Environmental Rights, Calling on Legislators to Advance the New Jersey Green Amendment

New Jersey: Youth leaders from the New Jersey Student Sustainability Coalition, Bye Bye Plastic Bags New Jersey, and high schools across the state urged their legislators to protect their right to a healthy environment and take the next steps in advancing the New Jersey Green Amendment at a press conference today.

The proposed amendment ([ACR80/SCR30](#)) would add environmental rights to the New Jersey state Constitution and would recognize and protect the rights to pure water, clean air, a stable climate and healthy environments for all people. It also specifically protects and acknowledges these rights for future generations. The amendment's prime sponsors are Assemblyman McKeon, Senator Greenstein and Senator Bateman and is supported in total by 12 Senate sponsors and 44 Assembly sponsors, including 48 Democrats and 8 Republicans.

Today, youth leaders rallied at a virtual press conference to share the stories behind their support of the Green Amendment and urge legislators to schedule hearings, allow the public to testify, and cast their vote on the record on whether or not the rights of all New Jerseyans to a healthy environment should be protected.

In just a few short months, New Jersey's next generation of leaders have become trained volunteer leaders with the national nonprofit Green Amendments For The Generations, and have developed [legislative webinars](#), [volunteer trainings](#), [video shorts](#), and an entire week of Green Amendment Earth Day events.

“The Green Amendment is the balm to our climate anxiety, insurance against shortsighted governance, and the acknowledgement from our leaders that we matter,” said **Svanfridur Mura, a freshman at West Orange High School and the Green Amendment co-coordinator at the NJ Student Sustainability Coalition.**

“As a youth living in the frightful world of today, where phrases like ‘lead water’ and ‘plastic pollution’ are the norm, the Green Amendment uniquely allows us to take charge of our futures. The amendment’s power lies in that it targets a wide range of environmental issues from plastic pollution, to fossil fuels, to factory waste. This gives it inordinate flexibility to defend the rights of a diverse people, coming from all different backgrounds and facing all different environmental crises,” said **Aarush Rompally, a student at Morris Hills High School from Parsippany, NJ and the Policy Coordinator of Bye Bye Plastic Bags NJ.**

“The Green Amendment will not only preserve our environment that is being destroyed with every new power plant, but also improve public health and protect the marginalized communities that have been targets of environmental injustice for generations. Unfortunately, environmental issues are rarely the priority or focal consideration in large decision making processes, which is why my generation is living in a world that is threatened by the effects of climate change. But the Green Amendment is a major step towards systemic reform that will ensure a clean, safe, and just future,” said **Ashley Park, a student at Bergen County Technical High School and the youth representative of the NJ Green Amendment Steering Committee.**

“This amendment is something that is sorely needed in our modern political climate especially to protect the millions of people who will be hit hardest by the lack of sufficient, ambitious legislation. This will be an important step toward a more sustainable future, but it will also produce more action and give more support for positive change,” said **Daniel Shapiro, a student at Golda Och Academy from West Orange, NJ.**

“All life is valuable and race, religion, income, gender, or sexuality should not determine the quality of anyone’s environmental conditions. The Green Amendment is necessary to give the marginalized a seat at the table and a voice in matters they have wrongfully been excluded from. It is necessary to give people the power to defend their rights to a healthy environment against companies with a profit motive and little concern for the environment.” Said **Ayanna Snowden, a student at Bergen County Technical High School and the Local Resolutions Tactic Coordinator at the NJ Student Sustainability Coalition**

“The strength of Green Amendments to help address the climate crisis and ensure protections for future generations is particularly resonating with New Jersey’s youth leaders. It’s been inspiring to witness and work with them as they step up in leadership roles with their own talks, action events, and outreach to legislative leadership,” said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and founder of the organization Green Amendment For The Generations,** which seeks to advance constitutional environmental rights nationally.

The effort to advance a New Jersey Green Amendment Movement has been led by Green Amendments For The Generations, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, South Ward Environmental Alliance, Clean Water Action, Environment New Jersey, NJ Sierra Club, Waterspirit, New Jersey Student Sustainability Coalition, and Bye Bye Plastic Bags NJ.

To watch the full Facebook Livestream of the event, visit <https://fb.watch/5CqYLP4UPr/>

For more information on the NJ Green Amendment Movement, visit www.NJGreenAmendment.org

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