

PRESS STATEMENT

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New Mexico Green Amendment Movement Gaining Traction *Cosponsorship grows to 23 in anticipation of 2022 30-day session.*

Santa Fe, NM -- Leading cosponsors of the New Mexico Green Amendment that will establish a constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment for all New Mexicans, including future generations, announce growing interest and support from legislators and community, faith, environmental, and indigenous leaders. The NM Green Amendment was first proposed in the 2021 legislative session by Senators Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, Representative Joanne Ferrary, Senator Bill Soules, and Senator Harold Pope, Jr. The amendment proposal passed out of the Senate Rules Committee with majority support but, along with other numerous environmental proposals, was denied a hearing in the Senate Judiciary committee and therefore, failed to advance. But this year, with key senators making the amendment a priority for 2022 passage, it is receiving growing legislator and community support, secured a hearing before the Interim Water & Natural Resources Committee, and was most recently included among the select legislative efforts featured during policy breakout discussion in Speaker of the House, Brian Egolf's 2021 New Mexico Climate Summit.

As of October 23, the New Mexico Green Amendment has gained the support of 23 Cosponsors and over 40 organizations. As a constitutional amendment proposal, the NM Green Amendment can be put forth for consideration in the upcoming 2022 30-day session by legislators. "Passing the New Mexico Green Amendment will ensure the government will recognize and protect the right of all New Mexicans to clean water, air and land. It will also protect the tribes' cultural relationship to the environment", announced lead sponsor **Senator Antoinette Sedillo Lopez**, "Passing the amendment through the two houses of the New Mexico legislature will provide the people of New Mexico the opportunity to vote on whether they want constitutionally protected environmental rights in our beautiful state."

Representative Joanne Ferrary of House District 37, lead sponsor in the House, and Committee Member of House Energy, Environment and Natural Resources, and Health and Human Services says "I'm honored to be a sponsor for the NM Green Amendment that

will offer voters a chance to weigh in on environmental protections and have all levels of government assessing the impacts of permits, land and water use for the generations! The health and welfare of our citizens are at stake and can't be compromised!"

Senator Harold Pope Jr. of Senate District 23 and a long time supporter and cosponsor of the NM Green Amendment states "The Green Amendment is not just another piece of environmental legislation but a movement that protects the people's rights to clean water, air, and land as well as addressing climate change and providing healthy environments. This Constitutional Amendment will ensure that policymakers always enact policies through an environmental and equitable lens. Our communities are telling us to act now and we must to ensure we protect the environment for current and future generations."

Senator Carrie Hamblen of Senate District 38 voiced her support saying, "It is important for us to take seriously that not only our county and our state, but our planet is suffering because of environmental degradation. The health of our communities is dire, especially those areas in which black, brown, and indigenous people reside. These areas are the most damaged, abused, and ignored, while being denied clean water, clean air, healthy soils in which to grow healthy foods, dealing with drought and storms, and worrying about the healthy plant and animal communities that support and enrich their lives. Moving forward with a Green Amendment in New Mexico will be essential in removing the inequities these communities face on a daily basis." In response to a request from Senator Hamblen, the **Doña Ana Board of County Commissioners** passed a proclamation in celebration of July 13 as National Green Amendment Day. The proclamation can be found [here](#).

Senator Liz Stefanics of Senate District 39 says "The Green Amendment would allow every New Mexican the opportunity to own the future of our land, earth, air, and water."

Representative Andrea Romero of House District 46 says "Every single day more leaders are joining the movement to build and grow a government that will combat climate change's deadly and destructive impacts. As our group increases, so does the incredible potential for this Amendment to create the ability for us to create sustainable and committed change to our people and environment. "

Representative Kay Bounkeua of House District 19 added "The NM Green Amendment gets us closer to addressing the climate and extinction crises and will help us course correct our relationship with the environment. We can no longer deny that the violence we do to the Earth has a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of our families and the communities in which we belong. The growing political will and community support for this work emphasizes the urgency in which we most move as a state."

Senator Ortiz y Pino of Senate District 12 also added, "The eagerness with which so many New Mexico State legislators have received the opportunity to sign on to this crucial legislation is heartening. Especially when action on climate change at the national level

seems to have bumped up against deep resistance, realizing how many of my colleagues in our state are willing to stand up for the Green Amendment gives me great hope that genuine change is still possible. The sense of urgency lacking at the national level has taken hold here."

Representative Debbie Sarinana of House District 21 states powerfully "Every New Mexican deserves clean air, clean water and a healthy place to live. The Green Amendment is just the beginning to making that happen."

Representative Patricia Roybal Caballero of House District 13 adds "Securing true environmental justice here in New Mexico, where we have a history of disproportionate environmental impacts inflicted on indigenous communities and communities of color, is a vital and needed priority throughout the government. The NM Green Amendment will ensure that all government officials are protecting the environmental rights of all people equitably. When our laws and government laws and decisionmaking fails to fully, fairly and equitably protect all people, including future generations, the amendment will give people the constitutional power they need to set things right. As a result, advancing the NM Green Amendment is among my highest priorities for 2022."

Alongside the legislative support of the New Mexico Green Amendment, there is an incredible backing from community leaders across the state with 43 organizations signed on in support.

Sister Joan Brown, osf, Executive Director of New Mexico & El Paso Region Interfaith Power and Light, said, "Now is a critical time to care for our sacred creation and communities. We face physical and economic effects of human induced climate change, with the young, old, and frontline communities affected most. We carry the sorrow of the sixth greatest extinction and the loss of biodiversity so that our children will not experience the wonder of God's creation in her fullness in New Mexico. We have soul imperative as people of faith to offer new ways to witness for and protect water, land, air and communities into the future."

"My organization is a branch of the national organization, Great Old Broads for Wilderness. We are an education, advocacy and stewardship group that empowers primarily women to defend public lands, waters and communities as to ensure protection of clean air, water, healthy environments and habitats for all of Mother Earth. We strive to keep wildlands wild and to keep public lands in public hands as part of a solution to climate change. This safe climate goal is for the future generations that will follow us. My organization has been a vital supporter of the New Mexico Green Amendment so that future generations will have a voice in decisions that affect not only our state, but also our planet" **Linda Starr, Co-leader, Rio Grande Valley Broadband** added.

"The Green Amendment establishes the common-sense principle that everyone has the right to live in a healthy environment. It's pretty difficult to argue the opposite, that only some people have that right and others don't," **Director, Water-Culture Institute, Santa Fe, David Groenfeldt** said.

"New Mexicans have long protected our Earth Mother and the gifts she gives to us. We all have the rights to clean air, water, land and a right to a livable future and yet our rights are being violated. We see despoilment and unprecedented extraction preying on the sacred lands of Indigenous communities across our State and the US. These reckless actions rooted in environmental racism pose enormous risk to our health and environment - our communities must defend ourselves and protect the land we love. Addressing and mitigating the impending climate catastrophe threatening our future will require us to use every single tool we have at our disposal - including passing a Green Amendment," stated **Jonathon Juarez-Alonzo with YUCCA.**

Athena Christodoulou, the CD-1 vice chair for Veterans and Military Families caucus of the Democratic Party of New Mexico voiced support in saying, "It is clear that we need to be raising our right to clean air, land, and water to the same level as our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. For too long our state government has been pressured to ignore those rights, those very human rights, at the expense of our future. Give it moral courage. Put the Green Amendment on the ballot for ALL New Mexicans to decide."

Maya van Rossum, founder of Green Amendments For The Generations and the national Green Amendment movement said "New Mexico is a leader in advancing meaningful and enforceable constitutional protection for the rights of present and future generations to a clean and healthy environment. Communities from across the nation are following New Mexico's lead, using similar language and being inspired by the groundswell of legislative and community support advancing here. Not only is the Green Amendment a powerful tool for environmental protection, but it offers powerful strength for the environmental justice and climate justice movements."

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