



TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT** OF
HJ 37 Resolution Proposing An Amendment To The State Constitution To
Provide For An Environmental Rights Amendment

February 27, 2023

To: Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Lopes and Rep. Gresko, Vice Chairs Sen. Hochadel and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Harding and Rep. Callahan, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of CTLCV, thank you for the opportunity to comment **in support of HJ 37** that would enshrine the protection of CT's environment and natural resources in the state constitution, ensuring that *all* communities in CT have the same rights to clean air, water, and healthy environments.

CTLCV supports this effort as a **fundamental shift** in the way our state handles pollution and environmental degradation.

An Environmental Rights Amendment to our state constitution **puts the focus on environmental protection at the planning and decision-making stages of state and local government**, rather than accepting damage that needs to be "managed" after the fact.

This would also help fill the gaps in current environmental laws to secure protections in situations where government says it lacks clarity or authority to address environmental problems.

While we have major environmental laws at the state level (Environmental Protection Act) and the national level (Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and others), there is no statement of environmental rights in the CT Constitution.

We fully support a resolution to add an Environmental Rights Amendment to our state Constitution, raising environmental protections to the same level as other basic human rights. This will outline a clear constitutional duty on all government officials to protect our environment for all communities equitably. Such an Amendment creates a constitutional mandate that each person, regardless of who they are or where they live, has a right to clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment. Thank you for considering these comments.

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