

PRESS STATEMENT

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Radioactive Waste and Hazardous Materials Committee Votes in Support of New Mexico Green Amendment Movement

Santa Fe, NM – Recognizing its value for ensuring beneficial environmental protections on Friday, November 12, 2021, the Radioactive Waste and Hazardous Materials Committee of the New Mexico legislature vote 6 to 1 in support of the proposed New Mexico Green Amendment. In response to a request by NM Green Amendment prime House sponsor Representative Joanne Ferrary, Committee Chair Jeffrey Steinborn put the proposed constitutional amendment before the Interim Committee for consideration.

“At the meeting of the Radioactive and Hazardous Waste Committee, we heard powerful testimony on the environmental impacts from nuclear contamination, how needed cleanups are taking years to accomplish, and the threat posed to our environment and communities from the transport of dangerous nuclear waste across our New Mexico landscapes and through our communities on its way to ultimate dumping grounds. Listening to the testimony it was so clear that we need a Green Amendment to make sure our government at all levels will ensure we protect New Mexico’s land, air, water, flora and fauna for both present and future generations. I’m glad the RHWCM voted to endorse the Green Amendment,” said **Representative Joanne Ferrary of House District 37**, and lead sponsor of the proposed constitutional amendment.

“Giving the people of New Mexico an opportunity to vote to amend our constitution so as to protect our precious air, land, water, flora and fauna will be a powerful statement from ‘We, the People’ of New Mexico about our priority to preserve our beautiful and environmentally fragile state. Let the people vote!” exclaimed **Senator Antoinette Sedillo Lopez of Senate District 16**, and lead senate sponsor of the proposed NM Green Amendment.

Committee members Sen. Steinborn, Rep. Alcon, Rep. Ferrary, Sen. McKenna, Sen. Rodriguez, and Rep. Sarinana voted in support of the committee endorsement. Before the 2022 legislative session even begins, 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. Up to date information on supporters can be found at www.NMGreenAmendment.org.

“The New Mexico Green Amendment will provide a powerful positive foundation on which all government officials in the state can advance protective decisions, legislation and regulations essential for better protecting New Mexico’s people and natural resources. It will also ensure

that when there is inequity in environmental protection that the constitution can be relied upon by the people to restore needed essential protections. All those state legislators voting to advance the NM Green Amendment are sending a powerful message to the people of the state that they care deeply about their right to breath clean air, to drink clean water, to a climate that is safe and sustainable, to live in healthy environments, to ensure that present and future generations all enjoy the incalculable benefits of a healthy environment, and that environmental equity and justice across all communities regardless of race, ethnicity or socioeconomics is a priority," stated **Maya van Rossum, founder of Green Amendments For The Generations and thenational Green Amendment movement.**

"We thank the New Mexico Radioactive Waste and Hazardous Materials Interim Committee for voting 6-1 last week in support of the Green Amendment. We must all act with a greater sense of urgency to the current climate crisis which poses existential threats to communities all over the globe, especially Indigenous communities and those on the front lines of climate catastrophes who are facing various threats such as rising sea levels, increasing mega-droughts, among others. Now more than ever do we need actions and policies that prioritize our sacred Mother Earth and protect limited and precious resources. We need to think about our children, grandchildren, and the generations to follow. The Green Amendment will recognize everyone's fundamental right to clean air and water. We are inspired by the recent vote in New York state to pass the Green Amendment, and we urge New Mexico to do the same," stated **Dr. Virginia Necochea, Executive Director, New Mexico Environmental Law Center.**

The proposed New Mexico Green Amendment currently reads:

SECTION 1. It is proposed to amend Article 2 of the constitution of New Mexico by adding a new section to read:

- A. The people of the state have the natural, inherent and inalienable right to a clean and healthy environment, including water, air, soil, flora, fauna, ecosystems and climate, and to the protection of the natural, cultural, scenic and healthful qualities of the environment.
- B. The protection of the state's environment is hereby declared to be of fundamental importance to health, safety and the public interest.
- C. The state, including its political subdivisions, shall serve as trustee of the natural resources of New Mexico and shall conserve, protect and maintain these resources for the benefit of all New Mexicans, including present and future generations.
- D. The provisions of this section are self-executing.

SECTION 2. It is proposed to amend Article 20 of the constitution of New Mexico by repealing Section 21.

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