

GREEN ORGANIZING ACTION TEAM:

“GOAT NOAT” FOR DECEMBER 2021

As 2021 wanes, we look ahead to 2022 and in mid-January, the opening of the Maryland General Assembly. It is hard to know how the upcoming election in November 2022 will influence the political calculus of decision-making in the Assembly that closes on April 11th. However, many observers believe that the Maryland Environmental Human Rights (MDEHR) Amendment has a better chance of passing the Assembly than ever before. If passed the Amendment would be sent to the voters for a decision in the November 2022 General Election. **GOAT is very interested in and supportive of this effort. There will be a discussion on the Amendment and follow up at the upcoming Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business on 12/5/21.**

MDEHR Amendment Petition <https://mdehr.org/actions/petition/> (accessed 11/29/2021)

We, the people of Maryland, call upon the Maryland General Assembly, commencing January 12, 2022, to pass the Maryland Environmental Human Rights Amendment and thus add this amendment to the ballot at the next general election on November 8, 2022.

This amendment to the Declaration of Rights section of the Maryland Constitution would guarantee that every person, as a matter of basic human dignity, has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful, stable environment. It would codify that the State is trustee of Maryland's natural resources, including its air, lands, waters, wildlife, and ecosystems, for the benefit and enjoyment of both present and future generations.

“Each person's fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment” was established in the Maryland Environmental Policy Act that the Maryland General Assembly passed in 1973.

We, the people of Maryland, believe this right needs to be protected in our state constitution for the following reasons.

1. It is a moral imperative to protect the basic human dignity of having a healthful environment
2. The health of the people of Maryland is negatively impacted by environmental pollution and degradation. The health disparities are more egregious in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods where environmental pollution and degradation is concentrated.
3. An Environmental Human Rights amendment would empower all Marylanders, local governments, and the state to protect and defend this fundamental right.
4. A constitutional right would be the foundation for improved laws and regulations, and act as a true guardrail to prevent the most egregious forms of harmful actions now and for future generations, providing environmental justice in our state.
5. A constitutional right, as opposed to a regular law, would ensure that environmental protection is considered among the highest obligations of the government, pursued as “a matter of the highest public priority,” (per MEPA) and not merely “good public policy”.

We, the undersigned people of Maryland, ask the leadership of the Maryland General Assembly to bring this amendment to a vote on the floor in both chambers and support passing the Environmental Human Rights Amendment during the 2022 legislative session. Give the people of Maryland the right to decide whether the right to a healthful environment is a constitutional priority.

Members of GOAT are: Carol Beck, Gary Gillespie, Luke Mayhew, John McKusick, Rachael Neill, and Heather Ravlin