

Our Faith Communities Believe Everyone Has a Right to a Healthy Environment

Putting a **Healthy, Green Md Amendment** to the State Constitution on the Ballot (HB0472)

Across Maryland, a damaged environment threatens our communities. When pollution makes our neighbors sick, we have failed in our shared responsibility to “keep and tend the Garden,” as the biblical book of Genesis mandates.

All of our traditions teach that protecting Creation means protecting the life of our human neighbors, the well-being of our communities, and the health of our natural places. A damaged environment threatens all life by interfering with the rights of all people to drink pure water, breathe clean air, and live healthfully now and in the future. We are speaking out to explicitly protect the rights of all Marylanders to live in a life-giving environment.

The **Healthy, Green Maryland Amendment** would explicitly protect our right to a healthy environment now and in the future by enshrining it in the state declaration of rights. The Healthy Green Maryland Amendment bill asks our legislators to vote to put a proposed constitutional amendment on the ballot in time for Maryland voters to weigh in on the amendment at the polls in the 2020 election.

Maryland faith communities support the campaign for a **Healthy, Green Maryland Amendment** because:

- **Clean air and water are blessings entrusted to us** — This amendment supports all other protections for health and the environment. By affirming a right to a healthy environment, we are expressing an aspect of all our faiths: to protect and steward the places entrusted to us.
- **Ensuring healthy communities expresses our love for our neighbors** — This amendment would provide bedrock protections for individual rights and legally-recognizable standing so our neighbors can have access to courts when they are harmed by environmental injustice.
- **Ensuring a healthy environment expresses the calls of our faiths to promote a world in which future generations can live and flourish** — This amendment establishes Maryland as trustee of the state’s natural resources for the long term, asserting that the right to a healthy environment is on par with other fundamental rights protected in our constitution.

Why a **Healthy, Green Amendment**?

Maryland needs to take proactive steps to protect our communities and enable all of our neighbors to be able to defend their right to a healthy environment.

We have the chance to become one two dozen states to adopt similar amendments — including New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia — that affirmatively codify our right to a liveable future, including protections for:

- Our human and non-human communities, whether in cities, rural areas or wilderness
- Children and seniors who are most vulnerable to breathing dirty air
- Our economic future, wealth generation, and home values
- Natural spaces, including coastal wetlands and old-growth forests

To invite **Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin** to speak in your congregation about the Healthy Green Amendment campaign, email program@ipldmv.org.



#HealthyGreenMD