

# THE HEALTHY GREEN AMENDMENT

## A Christian Call to Love Creation and our Neighbor

*Will there be clean air, water and healthy communities for our children and our neighbors?*

*What shall all God's children receive - bread or a stone?*

*Love God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind. Matthew 22:36*

### Loving God's Creation expresses our love for God.

When pollution in the water, air and land jeopardizes the health of humans and other members of God's Creation, we are called to renew our commitment that God gave to humans, to keep and tend the Garden (Genesis 2: 15) The words "keep and tend" in Hebrew mean to work and cultivate. In other words, we are called to a nurturing relationship with the earth so that the environment remains fruitful and healthy. We are not to abuse it or leave it in a degraded state for our neighbors or generations to come.

*Love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:39*

### Ensuring healthy communities expresses our love for our neighbors.

Jesus taught that in addition to the first commandment of loving God, our faith also calls us to be in loving relationship and solidarity with our neighbors, especially those who live downstream or downwind of us. Do our actions let justice roll down their waters? (Amos 5:24) By supporting the Healthy Green Amendment we can fulfill the watershed golden rule: *Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you.* ~ Wendell Berry

*Choose life so that you and future generations may live. Deuteronomy 30:19*

### Ensuring a healthy environment expresses our faith's call to promote a world in which future generations can live and flourish.

*Laudato Si*, Pope Francis' encyclical on care for the environment, contains a core principle of Catholic social teaching: intergenerational solidarity. "Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others.... Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us."

*Jesus said, who among you, if a child asks for bread, would give them a stone?*

*Help us give the "bread of life" - clean air, water, and land*

*- to ourselves, our neighbors and future generations.*



# What is the Healthy, Green Maryland Constitutional Amendment?

It is an amendment to the Maryland state constitution that would assert and protect your right to clean air, pure water, unpolluted land and an ecosystem that is able to renew itself for generations to come. Placed in the State's Declaration of Rights, this amendment would set environmental health – essential for you and all life - on equal footing with the other civil rights that are the bedrock of American democracy.

## Why a Healthy, Green Maryland Constitutional Amendment?

Surprisingly, your right to clean air, pure water and unpolluted land is not now protected by either the state or federal constitution. Any protections you currently have are established by laws and regulations which can readily be changed, ignored (as too many are) or otherwise overridden. A constitutional amendment would secure this right for you, give you "standing" to sue for your rights, and require that the State and all its levels of government pursue policies that comply with the protections enumerated in this amendment.

## The Healthy, Green Maryland Constitutional Amendment eliminates "sacrifice zones"

This amendment reminds us all that there is no "away." Our waste, power plants, incinerators go somewhere. And that somewhere is often in neighborhoods far from the homes of policy-makers and their most privileged supporters. This amendment says that we must work to eliminate all sources of pollution, and in the meanwhile, protect everyone equally.

## *The Healthy, Green Maryland Constitutional Amendment supports healthy development*

All life leaves traces on the earth. Our task, and the call of this amendment, is to break the coupling of progress and pollution and for us instead to build a society and economy that support life now and in the future.

## *Our constitution is a charter of our society's deepest values*

Beyond their legal ramifications, constitutions speak to the values that undergird societies. Currently, our Maryland constitution says nothing about the inestimable value of the environment and our dependence on it. This amendment enshrines in our constitution our belief that nature is the foundation of all life, that it is a gift for all generations whose abundant goodness must be equally accessible to all, and that we all have the obligation to preserve its health for ourselves, each other and generations to come.

***SUPPORT THE HEALTHY GREEN AMENDMENT***