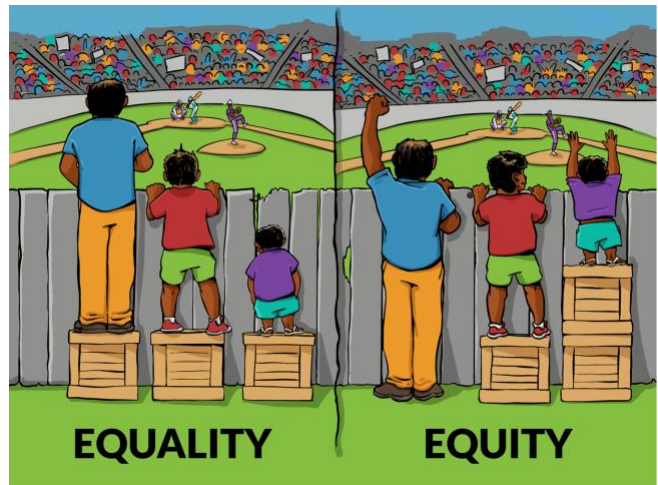


## How Will The Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment Make Lives Better by Enhancing Environmental Protection and Environmental Justice?

- ✓ The Connecticut Environmental Rights Amendment (CTERA) is Connecticut's version of a Green Amendment. Green Amendments ensure the rights of all people in the state to environmental essentials of life -- such as clean water and air, healthy soils and ecosystems, and a safe climate -- are given highest constitutional recognition and protection on par with other freedoms we hold dear such as speech, religion and due process.
- ✓ While Connecticut has many laws, it still has many environmental problems with people drinking polluted water, breathing contaminated air, being forced to live next to dangerously contaminated sites, and experiencing the growing impacts of climate change. Environments important to our cultures, cultural values, businesses and quality lives are being unacceptably damaged. The CTERA will ensure that when our environmental laws fall short and fail to protect our environment equitably for all people, that the constitution can be used by people and government to address the problem and protect people's lives.
- ✓ Equitable means that the rights of all the people in our state are protected, by recognizing that different communities experience and/or live in different circumstances, that some have suffered from greater pollution and environmental harms, and as a result these communities need and deserve greater efforts to ensure they can enjoy their rights to healthy water, air, soil and environments.
- ✓ Connecticut's government is created by the people of Connecticut through our state constitution. The constitution puts in place the rules which government must follow. Among those rules is that our state government is obligated to exercise its authority for the benefit of the people in our state. (article 1 section 2).
- ✓ The constitution's Declaration of Rights lists basic human, civil and political rights our government must protect and maintain, such as the right to free speech and due process. The CTERA will add our rights to a healthy environment to these basic freedoms.
- ✓ The CTERA creates an obligation on the government officials, agencies and entities within our state -- including at the local and state level -- to recognize the right of all people to clean and healthy air, water soil and environment; self-sustaining ecosystems; and to a climate supportive of safe and healthy communities and lives. The amendment as written will ensure government officials do not take actions that will infringe on those rights.



- ✓ With the CTERA in place, Government officials **must** protect the environmental rights of the people because, very simply, they cannot violate the constitution. So if the constitution says the people have a constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment, then the government is legally obligated to protect those rights.
- ✓ The CTERA strengthens environmental justice by very clearly stating that government must protect the environmental rights of all people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, wealth, or where they live in the state.
- ✓ If a community of color, indigenous community, rural or low income community is repeatedly impacted by dangerous levels of pollution at much higher levels threatening their health and lives, the CTERA will require protection of the environmental rights of **ALL** people, so historically marginalized communities should be able to rely upon the constitution to seek protection and a remedy.
- ✓ By very clearly stating that government must protect our state's natural resources for both present and future generations, the CTERA is requiring all government officials to ensure the environment is protected for all the people of Connecticut, including our future generations.
- ✓ Because the people of Connecticut are the beneficiaries (meaning the ones legally entitled to get the benefits) of our state's healthy natural resources, our government cannot help industry harm our environment to make more profits if it means destroying the environmental rights of our people.
- ✓ The CTERA cannot support a lawsuit brought directly against a private individual or company because the constitution's Declaration of Rights are in place to guide government actions; but that should include making sure they do not allow private companies or industries to harm the rights of the people. For example, if a company or industry is causing so much pollution or environmental harm that a community's constitutional rights to clean water and air, or healthy environments are being undermined, the CTERA may be a tool to challenge the government action that allowed that harm to take place - for example a permit that grants permission to pollute at unconstitutional levels.
- ✓ The CTERA can help prevent new environmental harms from new industry or development projects, but it can also be used to secure protection from ongoing pollution by identifying the government action happening today that is allowing unconstitutional harm to continue.
- ✓ The CTERA is intended to protect the health and safety of people and to ensure that government takes all steps necessary to ensure all businesses operate in a way protective of our environment and communities, and our constitutional environmental rights.
- ✓ With the addition of the CTERA to our state constitution, people now have an ability to advocate for their environmental rights on constitutional grounds.

**To Learn More:** [www.CTGreenAmendment.org](http://www.CTGreenAmendment.org)