



**Mayor and Council**

400 Witherspoon Street  
Princeton, NJ 08540

Meeting: 12/11/23 07:00 PM  
Department: Clerk

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**RESOLUTION 23-382**

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**Resolution of the Mayor and Council of Princeton Supporting “Green Amendment” to the New Jersey State Constitution**

**WHEREAS**, the right of New Jerseyans to clean water, air and a healthy environment is not given adequate or explicit protection in the State of New Jersey’s Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, while New Jersey has been known as a leader in environmental protection and natural resources conservation in the United States, there are still thousands of sites where pollution and contamination continue to adversely impact the environment and threaten the quality of our natural resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the American Lung Association notes that 11 of New Jersey’s 21 counties received an “F” rating when comparing smog levels to health-based air quality standards; and

**WHEREAS**, it is not unusual for New Jerseyans to wake up to news from the media with headlines and stories describing the threats to our public health; and

**WHEREAS**, the biggest threat to New Jersey’s environment is climate change, causing sea level rise, increase in ambient temperatures, more severe storms, frequent flooding, negative impacts to individual and public health, and more; and

**WHEREAS**, a clean and healthy environment is directly related to personal health and longevity, as well as the overall health and wellbeing of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, in recognition of these facts, a bi-partisan bill has recently been introduced in the New Jersey Senate co-sponsored by Senators Greenstein and Zwicker (SCR 30) and in the New Jersey Assembly co-sponsored by Assemblymen McKeon, Benson and Mukherji (ACR 80) which states that:

“1. The following proposed amendment to the Constitution of the State of New Jersey is agreed to:

“Amend Article I by adding a new paragraph 24 to read as follows:

“24. (a) Every person has a right to a clean and healthy environment, including pure water, clean air, and ecologically healthy habitats, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic qualities of the environment. The State shall not infringe upon these rights, by action or inaction.

(b) The State’s public natural resources, among them its waters, air, flora, fauna, climate, and public lands, are the common property of all the people, including present and future generations. The State shall serve as trustee of these resources and shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all people.

(c) This paragraph and the rights stated herein are (1) self-executing, and (2) shall be in addition to any rights conferred by the public trust doctrine or common law.

“2. When this proposed amendment to the Constitution is finally agreed to pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 1 of the Constitution, it shall be submitted to the people at the next general election occurring more than three months after the final agreement and shall be published at

least once in at least one newspaper of each county designated by the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the General Assembly, and the Secretary of State, not less than three months prior to the general election.

“3. This proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be submitted to the people at that election in the following manner and form:

“There shall be printed on each official ballot to be used at the general election, the following:

a. In every municipality in which voting machines are not used, a legend which shall immediately precede the question as follows:

If you favor the proposition printed below, make a cross (X), plus (+), or check (a) in the square opposite the word "Yes." If you are opposed thereto make a cross (X), plus (+) or check (a) in the square opposite the word "No."; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed ballot question would be asked in every municipality in New Jersey:

**CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ENSURE THE PEOPLE’S ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS**

“Do you approve amending the Constitution to grant every person the right to a clean and healthy environment? The amendment would also require the State to protect public natural resources.”; and

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT**

“This amendment provides that every person has a constitutional right to a clean environment. This includes the right to clean air, pure water, and healthy habitats. The amendment would require the State to preserve public natural resources. The State would also be required to prevent others from destroying or damaging public natural resources.”; and

**WHEREAS**, if the Resolution (SCR 30/ACR 80) is passed by the Senate and then the Assembly, and if it is agreed to by the voters in a public question ballot referendum, this “Green Amendment” will be added to the Bill of Rights of New Jersey State Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council of the Municipality of Princeton (Mercer County) recognizes that clean water, air and a healthy environment protects the health and enhances the quality of the lives of all New Jersey residents, and that equitable access to the same should be the right of all people in our State.

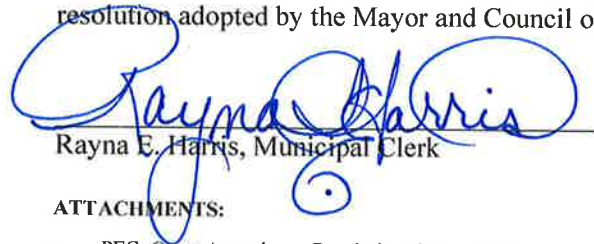
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the Municipality of Princeton (Mercer County) hereby supports SCR 30 and its counterpart in the Assembly ACR 80 (“The Green Amendment”).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Council of the Municipality of Princeton (Mercer County) encourages its legislative delegation to support SCR 30 and ACR 80 for full passage by the Assembly and Senate so that the voters of the great State of New Jersey have this opportunity to add “The Green Amendment” to the New Jersey State Constitution and Bill of Rights.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Municipality of Princeton (Mercer County) State Legislative Delegation and the Princeton Environmental Commission.

Councilperson	Absent	Present	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Disqualified
Ms. Pirone Lambros		X			X			
Ms. Niedergang		X			X			
Mr. Cohen		X		X	X			
Ms. Fraga	X							
Ms. Sacks		X	X		X			
Mr. Newlin		X			X			
Mayor Freda		X						

I, Rayna E. Harris, Municipal Clerk of Princeton, do hereby certify that the above is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Mayor and Council of Princeton at a meeting held December 11, 2023.



Rayna E. Harris, Municipal Clerk

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- PEC\_Green Amendment Resolution\_October 2023 (PDF)