

Borough of Fair Lawn



June 20, 2023

RESOLUTION NO. 248-2023

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF "GREEN AMENDMENT" TO THE NEW JERSEY STATE CONSTITUTION

WHEREAS, the right of the residents of New Jersey to clean water, air and a healthy environment is not recognized in the State of New Jersey's Constitution; and

WHEREAS, while New Jersey used to be known as an environmental leader in terms of passing legislation to require remediation of contaminated sites, generation and use of alternative forms of energy, recycling of certain materials at a high level, and numerous other environmental topics, there are still thousands of sites where the soil needs to be cleaned up and which contaminants continue to migrate down into and pollute groundwater, brownfields that need to be put to productive use, public drinking water supplies and school water systems that need to be rid of lead, solvents and chemicals, and places where the air is still unhealthy especially when ozone peaks in the summer heat, with the American Lung Association noting that eleven of New Jersey's 21 counties received an F rating from the group when comparing smog levels to health based air quality standards; and

WHEREAS, the biggest threat to New Jersey's environment is climate change, which impacts the Jersey shore, and may result in eventual loss of our barrier islands, loss of habitat and wetlands, detrimental changes to coastal living including erosion and accretion of land, which will impair titles and property rights, impairment of fishing, boating, seafood production and tourism, impairment of our shore-based tourism economy, and property damage, death and injuries from more severe storms and flooding influenced by rising sea level and warmer waters, and by more frequent and heavier rainfall; and

WHEREAS, a clean and healthy environment is directly related to one's health, and longevity; 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-D, and Bateman-R (SCR 30); and

WHEREAS, the interpretative statement to the proposed Constitutional amendment states that: "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, the New Jersey Senate Committee on the Environment recently passed SCR 134 by a bi-partisan vote of 4-0-1; and

WHEREAS, if the Resolution (SCR 30) 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 Borough of Fair Lawn recognizes that clean water, air and a healthy environment will help to protect the health and enhance the quality of lives of residents of Bergen County, our rivers and beautiful and legendary parks system, and help attract more business and more opportunity to the County and its residents,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough of Fair Lawn hereby supports SCR 30 and its counterpart in the Assembly ACR 80; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough of Fair Lawn encourages its County-based legislative delegation to support ACR 80 and SCR 30 for full passage by the Assembly and Senate so that the voters of our great State and great County may choose whether to add the right to a clean and healthy environment to the Bill of Rights of the New Jersey State Constitution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the municipality's State Legislative Delegation.

	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Reinitz						
Rottenstrich						
Cutrone						
Krause						
Peluso						

The within Resolution was duly adopted by the Borough Council at their meeting of June 20, 2023.

Nicholas J. Magarelli, RMC
Municipal Clerk