

Green Amendments for the Generations Annual Report 2020



www.ForTheGenerations.org
Phone: (267) 428 - 3425 | gaftg@fortheGenerations.org



**GREEN AMENDMENTS
FOR THE GENERATIONS**
Pure Water. Clean Air. Healthy Environment.

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Staff List

Maya K. van Rossum
Founder and Leader
Bridget Brady
Communications & Advocacy Coordinator
Molly Atz
Operations Manager
Colleen Burns
Green Amendment Coordinator
Quincy Nolan
Media Relations and Development Associate

How to get Involved

Become a [free member](#) at Green Amendments For The Generations to stay up to date on everything Green Amendment related and how you can help the movement in your state!

Become a [Green Amendment Leader](#) by completing our Getting Up to Speed to Lead training program. Green Amendment Leaders must participate in 3 interactive training sessions to have a detailed understanding of Green Amendment language in the context of your state and feel prepared to take on the activities needed to drive this movement forward.

Schedule an Event:

Maya is always available to come speak if you have an audience wanting to listen and learn more. All programs can be tailored to fit your group's interests.

Maya is a passionate and compelling speaker and is regularly invited to give keynote presentations, and has been featured on such programs as Midday on WNYC and as a regular guest contributor on BBC World Service Business Matters as an environmental expert. Simply email GAFTG@forthegenerations.org and make a speaking request.



The Green Amendment Book

[The Green Amendment Book](#) is the most comprehensive tool of all. Sharing the Book is a great way to introduce new people to this transformative idea. If you buy in bulk for sharing (3 or more), we are happy to give you a great deal.



Staying Engaged:

Keep up to speed on what is happening with the advancement of Green Amendments by following Green Amendments For The Generations on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) where we post ongoing actions in all of our active states. Follow us on [Instagram](#) to see where Maya is spreading the Green Amendment message.

A Reflection From Our Founder



Maya K. van Rossum

“Thank you for being a part of this journey to truly transformational change.”

The Rise of the Green Amendment Movement in 2020 has been awesome to witness and inspiring to be a part of. Over the course of 2020 we proved that meaningful constitutional environmental rights can bring together people from across the spectrum.

Green Amendments have received bi-partisan support in multiple states, notably New Jersey, New York and Maine where the legislative leadership has included both Democrats and Republicans.

The power of Green Amendments for ensuring all people, regardless of race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status, are entitled to a clean and healthy environment is inspiring Environmental Justice leaders to add this new tool to their work.

The strength of Green Amendments to help address the climate crisis is particularly resonating with our youth leaders who are stepping up in leadership roles with their own talks, action events, and outreach to legislative

leadership. We began the year with Green Amendment proposals in 4 states and ended 2020 with proposals in 11. Each state is following its own path, with some proposals gaining great traction and movement. But no matter the path, in every instance where there is a proposal, it is because grassroots, justice and legislative leaders are recognizing the power of Green Amendments for accomplishing truly transformational change when it comes to environmental protection, environmental justice, generational justice, and climate justice.

As I write this introduction to our 2020 Annual Report, I already have a glimpse of

the strength and struggles to come for our movement in 2021. We are on a path to truly transform how people think about, advocate for, and legally secure environmental rights. We are on a slippery slope to incredible success. As we gain more and more traction at the state level, we will be powerfully laying the foundation for the complementary federal Green Amendment that is also an essential piece of the puzzle. But strategically for now, we are focused on the states. I predict that within 5 years we will have achieved great success in states across our nation and be poised to put forth a federal Green Amendment.



2020 Highlights

Premiere of The Green Amendment Documentary Series

We partnered with acclaimed NJ film producer Steve Rogers to create two episodes of his Emmy nominated show, [Here's the Story](#), focused on the Green Amendment movement. Part 1 details the history of the Green Amendment movement and features key leaders who helped revive Pennsylvania's long ignored environmental rights amendment. Part 2 focuses on the growing effort in New Jersey to secure a constitutional amendment, and how a Green Amendment presents a tangible solution for environmental justice communities. Premiered on Earth Day and available on PBS and NJTV, the film continues to serve as an educational tool and creative way to spread the word. We began filming in the Fall of 2020 for new episodes that will focus on our NM work. Our goal is to create a growing documentary series that includes every state involved in our growing movement.



Expansion of GAFTG's Ongoing Environmental Justice

In 2020, Maya published a passionate [open letter](#) calling for environmental and racial justice, including details on how passing a Green Amendment in every state across the nation can serve as an invaluable tool for communities facing disproportionate environmental burdens. This letter was

complemented by a powerful [video piece](#) where 24 diverse nationwide leaders and activists joined to read the letter. The letter is now published by Intersectional Environmentalist, a platform dedicated to supporting intersectional environmentalism and dismantling systems of oppression in the environmental movement. 2020 also saw the creation of GAFTG's new committee on Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, comprised of Board Members and staff, focused on examining our organizational diversity and providing recommendations on ways to make our organization more inclusive. We continue to educate ourselves on how to be better allies, and actively seek to diversify our coalitions and partners, including consultation and collaboration with indigenous people and communities.



Coalition Building and Filming of New Mexico Focused Film Series

The GAFTG team met with a diverse set of allies in New Mexico in Fall 2020 to talk about their work and learn how they believe a Green Amendment might help achieve



critical environmental, climate and justice goals in the state. After quarantining, testing negative for COVID-19 and adhering to state protocols, Founder Maya van Rossum individually and safely interviewed over 20 environmental leaders, legislators and activists about environmental issues in their state and how a Green Amendment could help address them. This trip was documented in a special multi-part written piece called [Reflections](#), and will be further documented by additional installments of our Green Amendment documentary series focused on the growing movement in New Mexico. The first NM-focused episode was released in early 2021 and is available [here](#). The information learned and partnerships developed on this trip are an important part of the growing Green Amendment effort in New Mexico.

Launch of National & State-by-State Leadership Training Program

In Fall 2020, GAFTG launched a free community training program, [Getting Up to Speed to Lead](#), an interactive series designed to empower community members with a detailed understanding of the Green Amendment in the context of their state and provide them with action items to help drive the movement forward in their communities. Our first cohort of trainees included 57 participants representing 8 states. The program is designed for participants to become true Green Amendment Leaders who can knowledgeably and confidently talk about Green Amendments, secure resolutions of support from town councils and civic organizations, meet with state legislators, and speak about the Green Amendment

in the context of Environmental Racism. NJ trainees in particular have carried the knowledge and skills forward by meeting weekly to strategize on how they can help support the movement, developing video shorts and advancing other helpful strategies.



7

New
Proposals

55

Remote
Speaking
Engagements

46

Articles,
Podcast &
Radio Interviews

1st

State Specific
Website

2020 State by State

Colorado - Organizing

Colorado law students first expressed interest in leading a CO Green Amendment in 2018 when they invited Maya van Rossum to speak. Several students participated in our leadership program and while the effort is advancing slowly, there is definite interest. Contact us if you'd like to be involved in the grassroots organizing for CO!

Delaware - Active Proposal

A growing coalition of community and environmental leaders inspired by the Green Amendment message have been slowly but surely advancing in Delaware since 2018, with a recent uptick after Maya van Rossum's presentation at Socially Responsible Agriculture Project's virtual summit on Agriculture, Engagement & Solutions in late 2020. Early 2021 events began attracting the attention of interested legislators. Delaware State Representatives Madinah A. Wilson-Anton and Paul Baumbach were inspired to propose a Delaware Green Amendment after hearing Founder Maya van Rossum present at a virtual talk organized by local Delaware grassroots leaders.

Kentucky - Active Proposal

Representative Josie Raymond is a member of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL) and was inspired by Maya van Rossum's message at the 2019 NCEL National Forum. She reached out in July 2020 about working together to start a Green Amendment Movement in Kentucky which ultimately led to a proposal in early 2021.

Hawaii - Active Proposal

Senator Mike Gabbard was inspired by a presentation by GAFTG Founder, Maya van Rossum, at a National Caucus of Environmental Legislators webinar in July 2020 and reached out to launch a Green Amendment Movement in Hawaii. Senator Gabbard connected the GAFTG team with environmental grassroots organizations, allowing us to begin laying groundwork for a 2021 proposal.

Connecticut - Organizing

Our work in Connecticut began in 2019, when GAFTG founder, Maya van Rossum, spoke at the University of Connecticut Law School and explored the idea of pursuing a Green Amendment with a committed law professor. Maya is in regular communication with the professor and his law students on the concept. Contact us if you'd like to be involved in the grassroots organizing for CT!

Maine - Active Proposal

Though we've been fostering interest in Maine since 2019, enthusiasm and engagement for a Maine Green Amendment skyrocketed in 2020, including the formation of an active and dedicated steering committee, development of individual and organizational supporters, and engagement with Indigenous, legislative, and youth leaders. Initially proposed by Senator Chloe Maxmin, the amendment has secured bi-partisan support with Senator Richard Bennett as lead co-sponsor on the bill. The proposal was officially introduced in early 2021 and has advanced the name "Pine Tree Amendment."



Maryland- Active Proposal

Delegate Vaughn Stewart proposed an updated and improved version of Maryland's Green Amendment in early January 2020. GAFTG Founder, Maya van Rossum, joined Waterkeepers Chesapeake and youth leaders to testify in support of the proposal at a hearing held in February 2020. While the Green Amendment did not advance out of committee, the hearing demonstrated powerful support for the concept and efforts to advance the proposal are ongoing.



Oregon - Active Proposal

In July 2020, Senator Jeff Golden was inspired by an NCEL sponsored presentation by GAFTG Founder, Maya van Rossum, and reached out to start launching a Green Amendment Movement in Oregon. Senator Golden connected the GAFTG team with environmental and grassroots organizations in Oregon to start the conversation about this transformational approach for environmental protection. A proposal was put forth by the Senator in early 2021.

New York - Active Proposal

Our work in 2020 with key strategic partners garnered support from over 70 NY organizations and inspired 6 more municipalities to pass resolutions in support of a NY Green Amendment. GAFTG worked with NY partners to host educational events, including a three part webinar series and an environmental justice focused panel. The amendment continued to advance through the legislative process and secured the final votes necessary for legislative passage in early 2021. In November of 2021, The Green Amendment will be on the ballot for NY voters.



New Jersey - Active Proposal

In 2020, the proposed Green Amendment was re-introduced to the New Jersey legislature. New Jersey's Green Amendment movement is notable for the powerful youth leadership it has inspired with multiple student groups organizing information sessions, educational tools, and even video pieces. Part 2 of our Green Amendment [documentary series](#) is focused on the NJ Green Amendment and has helped advance understanding of the many ways New Jerseyans will benefit by this kind of constitutional protection. The next step for the NJ Green Amendment is for the proposal to be heard in the Assembly Agriculture Committee. Like Maine, the proposal has garnered bi-partisan support with Senators Linda Greenstein and Kip Bateman taking the lead in the Senate and Assemblyman John McKeon in the Assembly.



New Mexico - Active Proposal

Our New Mexico effort is guided by a very active and engaged steering committee of 14 leaders, has secured broad community support from 40 organizations, includes an active google group of over 90 individuals, and is the state where we first developed constitutional language focused on the cultural values of a healthy environment. We also developed a [New Mexico specific website](#) that became a model for other states. Senators Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, Bill Soules, and Harold Pope, Jr, along with Rep. Joanne Ferrary supported a Fall information session for interested environmental, community, and Indigenous leaders where they spoke to the values of a NM Green Amendment for the state and invited GAFTG Founder, Maya van Rossum, to present and answer questions. In late 2020, the legislators prepared so that their Green Amendment proposal could be pre-filed on the first day possible in 2021. A Green Amendment introduction in early 2021 being supported by [coalition press](#) and outreach further reflects the successful partnerships that are so key to this success.

West Virginia - Active Proposal

GAFTG continues to work with Delegate Evan Hansen and West Virginia Rivers Coalition to discuss and strategize. Delegate Hansen reintroduced West Virginia's Green Amendment in early 2020. Although the amendment did not pass through the legislature, ongoing interest is evident in West Virginia.

Vermont - Active Proposal

Inspired by GAFTG Founder, Maya van Rossum's 2019 presentation at the annual NCEL conference, Senator Christopher Bray was inspired to put forth a Green Amendment proposal in early 2020. Throughout the year, GAFTG worked with students from the Environmental Law Society of Vermont Law School and the Living Earth Action Group to host educational events. In accordance with the VT constitutional amendment process, the proposed amendment cannot move forward until 2023. This timeline is factoring into plans for education, outreach, organizing, and advancement.

Washington - Active Proposal

Representative Debra Lekanoff was inspired by GAFTG Founder, Maya van Rossum's presentation at the 2019 NCEL National Forum. She reached out in August 2020 about working together to start a Green Amendment Movement in Washington which ultimately led to a proposal in early 2021.



**Learn more on
the status of each
state [here](#).**

2020 Key Challenges

Adjusting to Virtual Engagement in the Age of COVID-19

Like most communities, we faced the unanticipated challenge of 2020 that was the COVID-19 pandemic. As early as February, we realized the seriousness of the pandemic and began brainstorming solutions to advance our work in a virtual and conscientious way. In the process, speaking engagements and strategy discussions were temporarily postponed, and in-person travel was quickly derailed. The need for virtual methods of engagement quickly became obvious, and we started to develop new and creative ways to spread our message and engage with communities. We began implementing virtual solutions, such as issue specific webinars, film screenings, a community leadership training program, Facebook and Instagram live sessions with key leaders, and weekly interactive trivia. We made critical upgrades to our website to better provide online resources for communities and relied on collaborative communication channels such as Google Groups and Slack. The pivot to virtual methods allowed us to advance our work, engage communities, and provide fun and educational events for folks following stay at home and quarantine orders.



Meeting the Growing Demand for Green Amendment Support

GAFTG is a young and growing organization that has already accomplished an amazing amount of work with only 2.5 combined full-time staff and with limited 2020 funding. There has been a massive uprising of interest in our work and the call for support has expanded rapidly. As each day passes more communities look for a positive and powerful path for environmental protection and securing true environmental justice. 2020 challenged us to match the need and provide resources to communities, legislators, and organizations. More support and a strategic plan is needed to help us effectively and quickly meet the rising demand for Green Amendment support and engagement. If you have ideas or opportunities to help support our work and spread the word we'd love to hear them -- just email us at GAFTG@ForTheGenerations.org



Addressing Opposition Successfully Requires GAFTG Expertise

In the last year, we have noticed a pattern from the opposition to use seemingly rational arguments to remove important elements of Green Amendment language, undermining the amendment's strength, and resulting in serious legal implications. GAFTG has successfully anticipated and addressed these points to ensure the power and strength of Green Amendment language is not compromised. This further confirms the critical need for GAFTG to be an active partner in every state that is pursuing a Green Amendment.

Laying the Foundation of Grassroots & Educational Outreach First

The Green Amendment movement and GAFTG organizational model is grounded in active and engaged partnerships. Each state's Green Amendment movement forms in different ways with initial interest coming from individual community members, organizations, or government leaders who have heard our message and became inspired. No matter what pathway the Green Amendment movement builds from, we have learned the



importance of building partnerships with grassroots organizations. We have learned the importance of beginning with broad educational outreach before constitutional amendments are proposed to ensure that the language which advances meets all the criteria of a true Green Amendment. Remember, there are over 40 states that talk about the environment in their constitutions, but only two have Green Amendments.



Sustainability Now: Clean Air & Water as Constitutional Rights with Maya van Rossum

Grassroots Movements Depend on Your Financial Support!

In a year of political and social unrest, the Green Amendment Movement pushed forward! Though we all experienced unprecedented challenges, your support helped us harness the power of positive, constitutional change in 14 states with more reaching out every day.

Your donation will directly support our work

to secure the right to pure water, clean air, a stable climate and healthy environments for all people including future generations.

A single dollar donated makes a difference on our impact and success, as we work to strengthen environmental protection & justice for all.

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2020 Green Amendment Victories

Pennsylvania and Montana are the only two states in the U.S. that currently have Green Amendment level protection, which protect and respect constitutional environmental rights on par with other fundamental human, civil, and political rights we hold as inviolate, inherent, indefeasible,

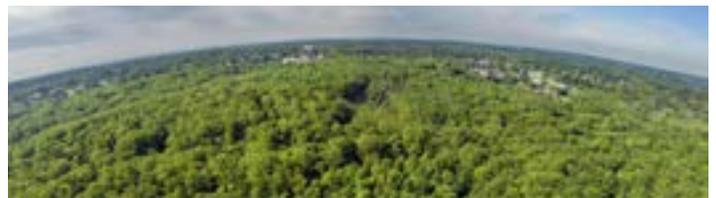
and inalienable rights protected from government infringement and transgression. A number of victories were secured in Pennsylvania and Montana for environmental protection that help demonstrate in the real world why constitutional environmental rights are so valuable.

Montana

On December, 8 2020, Montana state Supreme Court, citing in part the Montana constitutional Green Amendment in Article II, Section 3 and related Article IX, Section 1 of the state constitution, ruled against permitting a proposed industrial gold mine project at the gateway to Yellowstone National park, an iconic site known and treasured by the people of Montana, and an important economic and jobs driver for the region. The industrial mining investigations and future operations would take place in Emigrant Gulch, located just 15 miles North of Yellowstone National Park. Concerned with the environmental and related economic harms, it was the state's Green Amendment that supported the compelling rationale for the court's decision.

Pennsylvania

On December 14, 2020, citing in part the Pennsylvania Green Amendment, Article 1 Section 27 of the state constitution, the Board of Commissioners of Marple Township, PA voted unanimously to reject a proposed residential development plan that would clear-cut 89 acres of forest in the Don Guanella woods. The Don Guanella woods provide many environmental, health, and recreational benefits to Marple Township and Delaware County, PA residents.



Our Supporters Gave Back

On Giving Tuesday 2020, our Board and members raised 26% more than in 2019. We doubled the amount of member donors compared to our 2019 Giving Tuesday campaign, with 58% being new donors to Green Amendments For The Generations. We kicked off our end of year fundraising with a virtual art gallery and party with [Artists4Earth.com](https://www.artists4earth.com) to give our dedicated members a meaningful way to support environmental rights. The event prompted over \$1,000 from both online donations and the live auction of the late Joseph Crilley's paintings, kindly donated by Suzanne and Pamela Crilley. In our online Year End giving campaign, our members once again saw the importance in our work and gave back. The number of

donors increased by 2.5 times compared to last year, with 47% being new donors to Green Amendments For The Generations.

Our 2020 online supporters hailed from California to Maine! 62% of Green Amendment donors are from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New Mexico.

We acknowledge that this has been a financially difficult year for many of our members, and we are so grateful for the support we received. The fact that our members came through in such significant numbers in these unprecedented times demonstrates that our work has never been more important and is providing real value for communities nationwide.

Early 2021 Successes

In the 2021 legislative session, after being inspired by the national Green Amendment movement, states across the nation are quickly moving to pursue Green Amendments and protect the environmental rights of their people. Only Montana and Pennsylvania currently have Green Amendments, but after seeing rapid growth in the movement, due to the inspirational leadership of one woman and her fledgling organization, 13 states are advancing Green Amendment proposals in 2021. New 2021 proposals include: New Mexico, Maine, Hawaii, Iowa, Oregon, and Washington.

Notably, New York has become the first of the 13 states to pass their Green Amendment proposal legislatively. The amendment will be placed on the New York state ballot for the people to vote on in November.

“The race to become the first state with a modern Green Amendment is on! After 5 years of spreading the Green Amendment message and the power of constitutional environmental rights for advancing environmental protection, climate justice,



generational justice and environmental justice, Green Amendments For The Generations has inspired 13 states to pursue Green Amendment proposals, and 3 of these states are poised to be the first in the modern era to give their residents the opportunity to vote for constitutional protection of environmental rights” - Maya van Rossum.

“The race to become the first state with a modern Green Amendment is on!”

Upcoming 2021 Initiatives

- Continue coalition building, grassroots organizing, broad educational outreach, and providing legal expertise to help states with Green Amendment proposals advance in 2021 to a Green Amendment Victory.
- Circle back with states that have a strong foundation to further strategize and work toward accomplishing a Green Amendment Victory near term.
- Work in states with a strong legislative champion and undertake the strategic planning necessary to drive the Green Amendment movement forward.
- Institute [Green Amendment Day](#), July 13th, a day dedicated to educating and engaging civil rights, environmental, environmental justice and Indigenous leaders around the power of Green Amendments for ending environmental racism and providing constitutional grounding for securing environmental justice nationwide.
- Launch our Ending Environmental Racism & Restoring Environmental Justice Through Constitutional Empowerment initiative, to be announced on Green Amendment Day. Among many goals of this initiative is the filming and premiere of a special Ending Environmental Racism episode of our documentary series.

Green Amendment Testimonials

“I’ve said this before - of all the things we do in terms of trying to protect and improve the environment, the Green Amendment is the #1 most important thing I have seen.”

- **Paul Rinear**, Chair, Aberdeen NJ Environmental and Shade Tree Advisory Board



“I just finished your magnificent book. So many people think the stories you tell are so 20th century. Your narrative brings them into close proximity to current days. It’s a very powerful exegesis. This gives me much material for effective defense of our committee vote.”

- **Senator Richard Bennet**, Sponsor, Maine Green Amendment, “Pine Tree Amendment”

“It’d be awesome to see Hawaii join Pennsylvania and Montana in protecting people’s rights to a clean environment through a Green Amendment. I applaud the vision and leadership of Maya van Rossum for igniting this national movement!”

- **Senator Mike Gabbard**, Lead Sponsor, Hawaii Green Amendment



“[Maya] writes persuasively and makes a convincing case. It was inspiring to see that grassroots activity combined with good lawyering can still create change.”

- **Dr. Greg Johnson**, Professor at Vermont Law School



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Partners & Supporters in our Green Amendment Movement

National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (National)
Adirondack Mountain Club (NY)
Beyond Toxics (OR)
Bye Bye Plastic Bags NJ (NJ)
Down to Earth Storytelling (ME)
Center for Biological Diversity (HI)
Clean Water Action (NJ)
Climate Youth Protectors Coalition (HI)
Environment New Jersey (NJ)
Environmental Advocates NY (NY)
Great Old Broads for Wilderness (NM)
Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition (HI)
Hawaii Youth Climate Coalition (HI)

Indivisible Nob Hill (NM)
New Jersey Student Sustainability Coalition (NJ)
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light (NM)
Retake Our Democracy (NM)
Socially Responsible Agricultural Project (DE)
South Ward Environmental Alliance (NJ)
Southwest Environmental Center (NM)
Southwest Native Cultures (NM)
Surfrider Foundation, Oahu Chapter (HI)
Sussex Health and Environmental Network (DE)
West Virginia Rivers Coalition (WV)
Youth United For Climate Crisis Action (NM)
Waterspirit (NJ)



Our mission is to pursue and secure constitutional protection of environmental rights in states across the nation and ultimately at the federal level.

Contact Us

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