



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 499

January Session, 2025

Substitute Senate Joint Resolution No. 36

Senate, April 3, 2025

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through SEN. FLEXER of the 29th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute joint resolution ought to be adopted.

RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CONCERNING ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS.

Resolved by this Assembly:

1 Section 1. That the following be proposed as an amendment to the
2 Constitution of the State, which, when approved and adopted in the
3 manner provided by the Constitution, shall, to all intents and purposes,
4 become a part thereof:

5 Article first of the Constitution is amended by adding section 21 as
6 follows:

7 Sec. 21. Each person shall have an individual right to clean and
8 healthy air, water, soil and ecosystems, a clean and healthy environment
9 and a safe and stable climate for the benefit of public health, safety and
10 the general welfare. The state shall not unreasonably infringe upon
11 these rights and shall make reasonable efforts to protect these rights
12 equitably. In recognizing all of the residents of the state, including
13 present and future generations, as the beneficiaries of a healthy

14 environment, the state shall seek to conserve, manage, protect and
15 maintain, for these beneficiaries, all of the natural resources of
16 Connecticut, including its waters, air, flora, fauna, soils and climate. The
17 state shall not unreasonably allow any degradation, diminution or
18 depletion of the natural environment that contributes to significant or
19 widespread environmental harm or results in an unhealthy or
20 unsustainable environment. The rights stated in this section are
21 equivalent to all other inalienable rights, may not be infringed and may
22 be directly invoked and enforced by the residents of this state.

23 RESOLVED: That the foregoing proposed amendment to the
24 Constitution be continued to the next session of the General Assembly
25 elected at the general election to be held on November 3, 2026, and
26 published with the laws passed at the present session, or be presented
27 to the electors at the general election to be held on November 3, 2026,
28 whichever the case may be, according to article sixth of the amendments
29 to the Constitution. The designation of said proposed amendment to be
30 used on the ballots at such election shall be "Shall the Constitution of the
31 State be amended to (1) provide each resident of this state an enforceable
32 individual right to clean and healthy air, water, soil and ecosystems, a
33 clean and healthy environment and a safe and stable climate for the
34 benefit of public health, safety and the general welfare, that is equivalent
35 to all other inalienable rights, and (2) place certain obligations upon the
36 state, including requiring the state to seek to conserve, manage, protect
37 and maintain the state's natural resources?"

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

The first sentence was rephrased for clarity.

GAE *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	None	35,000

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The resolution potentially places a proposed amendment on the ballot during the November 2026 election which will result in a one-time printing cost of \$35,000 in FY 27 to the Secretary of the State. The resolution must pass by three-quarters of the General Assembly for the cost to be in the FY 27 (2026 election). If the requisite votes are not met, the cost to the Secretary of the State will shift to FY 29.

The Out Years

The cost identified above is one-time; however the FY 27 cost may be shifted to FY 29 pursuant to the requirements of the constitutional amendment process.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSJ 36*****RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CONCERNING ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS.*****SUMMARY**

This resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to give each person an individual right to clean and healthy air, water, soil, ecosystems, and environment and a safe and stable climate for the benefit of public health, safety, and the general welfare. Under the resolution, these rights are inalienable, and state residents may directly invoke and enforce them.

It prohibits the state from unreasonably infringing on these rights and requires it to make reasonable efforts to protect them equitably for all state residents. It also requires that the state seek to conserve, protect, and maintain all of its natural resources for state residents (present and future), including its waters, air, flora, fauna, soils, and climate.

It also directs that the state shall not unreasonably allow any degradation, diminution, or depletion of the natural environment that contributes to significant or widespread environmental harm, or results in an unhealthy or unsustainable environment.

The ballot designation to be used when the amendment is presented at the general election is: "Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to (1) provide each resident of this state an enforceable individual right to clean and healthy air, water, soil, ecosystems and environment, and a safe and stable climate for the benefit of public health, safety and the general welfare, that is equivalent to all other inalienable rights, and (2) place certain obligations upon the state, including requiring the state to seek to conserve, manage, protect and maintain the state's natural resources?"

EFFECTIVE DATE: If the resolution passes by at least three-fourths of the membership of each house of the General Assembly, it will be placed on the 2026 general election ballot. If it passes by a majority of the membership of each house but less than three-fourths, it will be referred to the 2027 session of the legislature. If it passes in that session by a majority of each house, it will appear on the 2028 general election ballot. If a majority of those voting on the amendment in the general election approve it, the amendment will become part of the state constitution.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13 Nay 6 (03/19/2025)