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**Senator Daylin Leach & Environmental Leader Maya van Rossum
Discuss the Power of Green Amendments**

King of Prussia, PA - Pennsylvania State Senator Daylin Leach (D-Montgomery/Delaware) and Maya van Rossum, environmental activist and founder of Green Amendments For The Generations, today held a live virtual discussion about the power of Pennsylvania's constitutional environmental rights amendment, or its Green Amendment. Leach and van Rossum discussed how the Green Amendment could impact threats facing Pennsylvania communities, such as fracking.

Pennsylvania is one of just two states in the nation that has a Green Amendment, which in 2013 received legal life in a watershed legal victory from a court case van Rossum was party to. With relatively new power compared to the constitutional amendments of the founding fathers, such as the right to free speech, Pennsylvania's Green Amendment is proving now to be a transformative tool for environmental rights. Leach and van Rossum's discussion explored the power and importance of PA's Green Amendment, and how it can be used and has been used to protect Pennsylvania. Pennsylvanians learned more about their constitutional right to clean air, pure water and a healthy environment, and viewers in other states learned how a Green Amendment can thrive in a state like Pennsylvania that has a historical record of environmental degradation.

"I'm thankful for Maya's incredible work on upholding PA's Green Amendment and very happy she invited me to have this conversation; it's one that the citizens of PA should be having with their legislators all the time," **Leach said**. "What Pennsylvanians accomplished when passing our own Green Amendment in 1971, unanimously in the General Assembly and 4-1 when taken to the people, seems impossible today. The right to clean air and clean water shouldn't be about partisan politics. I hope our conversation provided the tools and info people need to talk honestly about this with their legislators in Harrisburg, and that we will start to work together to give our Environmental Constitutional rights some real meaning."

"Green Amendments are an incredibly powerful tool for environmental protection," **said Maya van Rossum, Founder of Green Amendments For The Generations**. "After over 25 years of being an environmental advocate and attorney I have learned how our current system of environmental protection laws are failing us. I am grateful legislators like Senator Leach recognize the importance of a Green Amendment and how it can, and should, affect environmental threats that Pennsylvania is facing. Pennsylvania is setting the example for other states in the nation to follow. I often receive questions about why Pennsylvania is still facing environmental degradation, and how we still have fracking, despite having a Green Amendment. I was happy to join the Senator in sharing information to communities about their environmental rights so they feel empowered to stand up against environmental harms."

Leach is pushing back on industry and hoping to take the question directly to the people, as he recently [proposed legislation](#) in 2019 that would create a constitutional amendment banning fracking in Pennsylvania.

“Pennsylvania’s fracking experiment has been a complete disaster,” Leach said. “Our neighbors continue to suffer, and contamination continues unchecked. I no longer have any confidence in the industry’s ability to keep people safe from the harms caused by this process. We were promised an industry that would bring jobs and wealth to Pennsylvania, but instead it’s brought cancer and suffering. We have ignored the staggering human cost for too long. For the sake of our families, neighbors, and all of humankind, we must stop fracking as soon as possible.”

In order to become a constitutional amendment, this bill would have to pass two legislative sessions. After passing two legislative sessions, the proposed constitutional change must then pass an up-or-down vote by the public at the ballot box.

Maya van Rossum, in her role as the Delaware Riverkeeper, was part of the 2013 court case that reinvigorated Pennsylvania’s Green Amendment. The victory inspired her to write her award-winning book, *The Green Amendment, Securing our Right to a Healthy Environment*, and start the nonprofit organization Green Amendments For The Generations, which is working to advance Green Amendment proposals nationwide.

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