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Submitted to: Senate Committee On Rules
Topic: SJR28 Testimony - In Support of the Right to a Healthy Environment Constitutional Amendment

I live in Corbett, a rural community that faces pressure and a declining quality of life from encroaching urbanization, tourism, and climate change. I want to invite everyone to enjoy our beautiful area, but the impact is significant on the health of the natural environment and our daily lives. The threat of forest fires is increasing and many of my neighbors, literally, suffer from PTSD each year, when fire season comes around. When you live in an agricultural community, you see how significantly and quickly the climate is changing, and it's scary.

There is so much coming down on the climate front (including viruses that will emerge) as, at the same time, we face elimination of health protections by the federal government. One starts to feel very small in the face of it all. Yet, there are also socio-economic issues, like houselessness and the need for transportation investments, that impact the public's mental and physical health. To find win-win solutions for our current time (for simultaneous consideration of eco-systems and other human needs) requires creativity, an American can-do attitude, and a desire to find common ground. And, this means we must work as a collective, with the belief that we are in it together and we are only here by the grace of God and nature.

This is why I believe we need to update our Constitution in regards to this matter and recognize that the state has a compelling interest in a healthy environment. This is a missing tool in our toolbox. We must work together, when the times call for it, and make sure that everyone and every ecosystem is cared for.

It is clear that the times call for it; This amendment is now essential. As our Grange motto says, "In essentials, unity, in non-essentials, liberty, in all things, charity."

Please vote yes on SJR-28 and let the people speak.