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**Organization or Agency:** CT Working Families

**Topic:** HJ00037 - RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION

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Supports

**Testimony:**

Senator Lopes, Representative Gresko, and members of the Environment Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify today.

My name is Roger Senserrich, and I'm a parent who lives in East Haven. I am the Policy and Communications Director at Connecticut Working Families. I testify today in support of H.J. 37, "Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Provide for an Environmental Rights Amendment".

Connecticut, and our country, is facing an environmental crisis. Climate change is no longer a prediction, something scientists warn about, lurking far on the horizon. It is here with us, and its impact is undeniable. We have seen it during this legislative session, with yet another snowless winter here in New England (excepting this week, of course!). We see it every summer, with heat waves and drought.

The harm from this environmental crisis, its impact, is not equal for all of us. Pollution, toxic lands, dirty air, and dirty water are not evenly distributed in our state. The harm from climate change, and the emissions and environmental degradation that led to it, are concentrated on our poorest cities and towns, especially in communities of color.

Part of the responsibility for these crises falls on this building. Connecticut does not have an enforceable legal right to a clean and healthy environment. We recognize many rights, but not the right to live in a city, in a state where the air, soil, and water are healthy enough to enjoy them.

H.J. 37, the Environmental Rights Amendment, will ensure that environmental rights are protected equitably across the state. It will ensure that government officials, across the board, not just consider but prioritize environmental protection in the decision making. It will require that we look at our environment as the foundation for where we live, the starting point for our pursuit of happiness. It will prevent harm, not just try to manage the consequences for our actions.

Everything we do has consequences. Every road widened, every storm runoff left untreated, and every power plant we open has an impact. It is time we take that into account, looking both at their immediate economic impact and at their long-term consequences for our climate.

I encourage this committee and vote in support of H.J. 37. Thank you for your time today, and I'm happy to take any questions.