

RESOLUTION 01-2019 URGING THE TOMPKINS COUNTY LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT THE NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY AND SENATE BILLS TO ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR THE ADOPTION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

Whereas, in the United States there are thirty-five of our states/commonwealths with Constitutions that contain some form of “environmental rights” or expression of environmental values; and

Whereas, most New Yorkers believe that they have a right to breathe air that will not make them sick and to drink and use water that is not going to make them sick; and

Whereas, there is also a general belief that we all have a right to live, work, and play in an environment that is generally afforded protection by our government; and

Whereas, there is at present a uniform bill before both the New York State Assembly (A. 2064 [Englebright, Gottfried, et al.]) and the New York State Senate (S. 2072 [Carlucci et al.]) to add language to our New York State Constitution that will formally establish in the New York State Constitution a right to clean water, clean air, and a healthful environment; and

Whereas, formally establishing such a civil environmental right will help drive better government decision-making at all levels, helping prevent conditions in which land becomes too contaminated, water becomes too polluted, and air too dirty. Establishing such a right will also affect individuals and private enterprise and promote better decision-making based on the value set that all New Yorkers have environmental rights; and

Whereas, passing these bills will address a gap in our legal foundations and provide an expression of values that other states have already seen fit to establish; now therefore be it hereby

Resolved, That the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council urges the Tompkins County Legislature to pass a Resolution of Support for the enactment of an Environmental Bill of Rights by amending Article I of the New York State Constitution to add a new section to establish environmental rights. The new text would read: “Each person shall have a right to clean air and water, and a healthful environment.”