

Sofia Mykytenko
The Greenest Girlies
Staten Island Technical High School
@thegreenestgirlies

Comparing the United States to the Rest of the World

Rights of nature laws, often referred to as "ecological jurisprudence," have made significant strides in countries like New Zealand and Ecuador, where ecosystems and natural entities are granted legal standing and protection. In contrast, the United States has been slower to adopt such comprehensive environmental legal frameworks. The U.S. traditionally relies on regulatory laws and litigation to address environmental issues, rather than recognizing the inherent rights of nature.

New York, as a state within the U.S., is somewhat more progressive in environmental policy compared to the national standard, with a strong emphasis on renewable energy, conservation, and pollution control. This is being done through the New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, which pledges to reduce GHG emissions to 85% of the emissions that were reduced in 1990. However, it still falls short of embracing a comprehensive rights of nature approach.

To evolve and follow the examples set by New Zealand and Ecuador, the rights of nature movement in the U.S. and New York can consider the following steps:

- **Advocacy:** Environmental organizations can advocate for the inclusion of nature's rights in state and federal legal frameworks.
- **Legislation:** Push for the enactment of rights of nature legislation at the state level, similar to what has been done in New Zealand and Ecuador.
- **Public Awareness:** Engage in public awareness campaigns to educate the general population about the importance of recognizing nature's rights.

Rights of Nature Movement's Impact in the United States

Environmental nonprofits in the United States have been advocating for specific policies that align with the rights of nature concept:

- **Earth Law Center:** This organization actively supports the drafting and implementation of Community Bill of Rights and Rights of Nature ordinances in various U.S. communities. They provide legal expertise and resources to help local governments pass legislation that recognizes nature's rights.
- **NRDC:** NRDC has been involved in legal battles and policy advocacy aimed at protecting specific ecosystems. They have worked to prevent oil drilling in the Arctic, fought for clean air and water policies, and supported regulations to protect endangered species.
- **Earthjustice:** While not explicitly focused on rights of nature, Earthjustice engages in litigation and policy advocacy that indirectly supports these principles by advocating for strong environmental protection laws and regulations.

Policy Advocates in the United States

Sofia Mykytenko
The Greenest Girlies
Staten Island Technical High School
@thegreenestgirlies

Mari Margil is the Executive Director of the International Center for the Rights of Nature and has been a key advocate for rights of nature in the United States. She has worked with communities and organizations to push for legal recognition of nature's rights.

One notable example of a specific policy that Mari Margil and her organization have been involved in is the "Lake Erie Bill of Rights" (LEBOR) in Toledo, Ohio. LEBOR is a community rights ordinance that grants legal rights to Lake Erie, recognizing it as a living entity with the right to exist, flourish, and be protected from pollution.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CynwQwwLIUF/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==>

