



2022 Candidate Survey on the Environment

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House , 149

OPEN QUESTION

To date, the environmental issue that I have focused on the most is food systems, especially regenerative and sustainable farming. I have been a long-time advocate of building a food system that addresses the impacts of a changing climate. In 2019, I published a cookbook called Think, Eat, Cook Sustainably: 100 Recipes, plus Tips & Ideas for a Healthy World. The book focuses on finding ways to eat that are in line with minimizing our carbon footprint by: reducing meat intake; eating locally and seasonally; and eating organic foods. In addition, I co-hosted a forum called Creative Conversations Around Sustainable Solutions, that gathered thought leaders to discuss ways to mitigate the climate crisis.

The 2022 legislative session had some terrific wins for the environment, especially on the renewable energy front. My top priorities for the 2023 legislative session are addressing CT's waste crisis, and passing the ban on use of neonicotinoids on commercial and residential properties.

The state of the environment poses an existential challenge to our future and is the defining issue for our generation. Currently, the United States is not on track to meet its goals of curbing overall greenhouse gas emissions by 50-52% by the year 2030. It is imperative that we do more to lower our carbon footprint, and take action to regulate hazardous chemicals in our food, our waterways, and our air. Furthermore, with the Supreme Court decision hobbling the EPA's ability to take meaningful climate action, it is more important than ever that we are represented by environmental champions at the state level.

1) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:

- Yes
Communities like Hartford and Bridgeport are unfairly burdened by the siting of toxic treatment facilities in their backyards that both compromise health and home values. When the COVID epidemic struck, it disproportionately affected Black and Hispanic populations in

these areas. It is important that CT's environmental justice law be updated to ensure that affected communities have more than cursory notification when developers are applying for siting of potentially harmful facilities.

2) WASTE MANAGEMENT:

- Yes

The closure of MIRA presents no good options for disposing of our waste. The only solution is to reduce our waste. Unit-based pricing, otherwise known as Pay As You Throw, is a fair and proven solution that incentivizes residents to reduce their waste by charging them based on how much they produce. It operates on the same principle of electricity pricing. There is no reason that people who produce less waste should subsidize those who are wasteful. We should continue exploring all the options and finding innovative solutions to better manage our waste.

In addition, we should continue to explore and expand ways to keep organic waste out of the waste stream through composting. Organic waste makes up approximately 30% of the waste stream and releases large amounts of methane into the atmosphere. Compost can be a valuable resource that can be used to replenish the soil.

3) POLYSTYRENE:

- Yes

Polystyrene is at once hazardous to humans because it is a dangerous carcinogen, and the environment, because its production is an air pollutant. The failure of SB118, which would ban polystyrene products from food services, to come to a vote in the House was a great disappointment. It passed by a wide margin in the Senate and deserves a vote. If elected I will do my part to bring this legislation up for a successful vote.

4) PFAS:

- Yes

The enactment of the ban on use of PFAS in firefighting foam and certain consumer packaging in 2021 was a great step for our first responders, and for preventing these forever chemicals from reaching our drinking water. Further action is needed to keep PFAS out of other household items, and to make sure that small changes to the chemical

formulas do not place them outside of the regulation.

5) NEONICOTINOIDS:

- Yes

While the passage of SB120 (an Act concerning the Use of Chlorpyrifos on Golf Courses) was an important victory, I was disappointed that the ban on Neonicotinoids was taken out of the final bill. I hope that it will be re-introduced this year, and that a ban on its use on state public lands will also be taken up.

6) RODENTICIDES:

- yes

I was heartened by the strengthened language on the rodenticide bill that passed the House in the 2022 session, but disappointed that it did not get called for a Senate vote. I would very much like to see this bill, which is so critical to the survival of our birds of prey, come back in the 2023 session.

7) DIESEL BACKUP GENERATORS/DATA CENTERS:

- Yes

Governor Lamont has been very proactive in bringing businesses to Connecticut. These businesses also attract families that support our communities. As legislators we need to find the right balance between regulating emissions and the potential for new jobs in the state. We need to find ways to continue to create jobs in the state while also protecting our environment. Our leaders should seek creative solutions to achieving both goals.

8) BEARS:

- yes

The recent killing of “Bobbi” the black bear, leaving two orphaned cubs, reinforces the importance of finding humane solutions to interacting with wildlife. As habitat for bears and other wildlife diminish due to development, encounters with these animals will become more common. It is important to find solutions that enhance our safety, and theirs.

9) TREE CUTTING PROTOCOLS:

- Yes
Public Act 22-143 requires DEEP to create a policy for hazardous tree removal, start a tree planting program for the Housatonic Meadows State Park, and submit a report to the CGA regarding the future of the practice by December 1, 2022. I look forward to reading the report and working from there to find a way to address tree-cutting policies by the DOT and utility companies and ensuring that these are in line with conservation policies.

10) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

- Yes
I think that allowing, but not requiring, communities to create a conveyance fee to raise funds for sustainability projects is a win for local communities who want to be in greater control of their finances and their development.

11) RIPARIAN BUFFERS:

- Yes
As the representative of a coastal community which is often the victim of flooding, I would support riparian buffers to prevent flooding events. I would want to learn more however about specific buffers and how they would impact homes in my district.

12) RANKED CHOICE VOTING:

- Uncertain
- I believe RCV is a promising idea that I'd like to learn more about to see how we can continue strengthening our democracy.