



2022 Candidate Survey on the Environment

Cristin McCarthy Vahey Democrat
House , 133

OPEN QUESTION

As you will see in the answers below, I tend to partner with constituents to work on issues that have grassroots support. Banning chlorpyrifos, helping to support funding for Aspetuck Land Trust land acquisition, supporting the conveyance tax for use by towns, working with CIRCA and Sen Cohen to examine coastal needs as Coastal Caucus co-chairs, supporting the Long Island Sound Blue Plan, getting dams disclosed at time of purchase, working to change tree removal policies, examining option for carbon pricing, passing the State Plan of Conservation and Development, supporting funding for transit and an expanded CHEAPR program, working with COGs on bike and pedestrian projects to encourage walking and biking, and going back a ways, banning microbeads - these are some, but not all, of the issues I have worked on with constituents, advocates, and colleagues.

As co-chair of Planning and Development, I spearheaded the effort to create the Commission on Connecticut's Development and Future, which is looking at multiple areas, including infrastructure, housing, and planning, all of which have a direct impact on our environment. I hope to do even more to bring environmental leaders to the table as we talk about these issues going forward.

In terms of a top environmental priority, I will work with those same groups, stakeholders, and constituents, to determine where we can together make change. There are many areas that need our attention.

Why does the environment matter to me? There is no life without earth, its air and water. I am a hiker, camper, jogger, swimmer, bicyclist, and more. Time in the great outdoors has been some of the most precious and valuable for my family and me. I also believe strongly that we are all connected and that what we do here in our home, our town, our state, our country, impacts those around the globe. Environmental policy solutions understand that air and water know no boundaries. Sustainable practices are important for our health and our economy, as well as our mental health, well being, and ability to connect with one another.

1) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:

- Yes

In addition to this, we need to continue to address the problems at the source level in order to avoid the need for such permits. Retrofitting buildings, promoting energy audits, continuing to invest in electric vehicle infrastructure, incentivizing green building, promoting and expanding CHEAPR, working in partnership with our local grassroots groups who are having success town by town and changing the hearts and minds of voters, extended producer responsibility. All of these things help us eliminate the need for this conversation altogether.

2) WASTE MANAGEMENT:

- Yes

Absolutely, yes. I have been meeting regularly with the Sustainable Fairfield Task Force Food and Waste subcommittee and just yesterday toured the Urban Mining plant in Beacon Falls. We have to do more on the back end, but again, prevention is key. Less waste to start means less to reuse and recycle. Less cost, better for our environment, and hopefully more innovation.

3) POLYSTYRENE:

- Yes

I fully support moving away from and eventually eliminating these products. I would like to see us work together with the restaurant industry, many of whom are small businesses who have been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

4) PFAS:

- Yes

5) NEONICOTINOIDS:

- Yes

I remained in communication and worked with Tara Cook-Littman, particularly at the very end of the legislative session, to help the bill before the House overcome the hurdles it faced in the final days of session. I know the compromise, which eliminated this portion of the bill, was necessary to pass the bill to ban chlorpyrifos. I am committed to continuing the work on neonics, and finishing the job. One of my constituents is leading the effort on pollinator pathways in Fairfield and another is working with our town departments to create pollinator gardens around town. I am ready to stand alongside them, Tara, and other state and local leaders on this issue.

6) RODENTICIDES:

- yes
I was unaware of the concerns related to this issue and plan to learn more.

7) DIESEL BACKUP GENERATORS/DATA CENTERS:

- Yes

8) BEARS:

- yes
I think a working group is an excellent idea and way to move this conversation forward.

9) TREE CUTTING PROTOCOLS:

- Yes
The Fairfield and Hamden forestry leaders, including LCV's own Mary Hogue, have been working for years to try to address this issue related to our utility companies. Together with Rep D'Agostino, I have worked to try and put a stop to some of these practices. Science based tree cutting protocols means consulting with arborists, assuring funding for maintenance consistently over time, and considering conservation values and of course the science of trees. The ongoing tension between roadway safety, power needs, and the desire of those of us who want to see as many trees as possible retained and maintained is a difficult one to resolve. I am interested in being part of this renewed conversation and believe others from Fairfield would be as well.

10) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

- Yes

11) RIPARIAN BUFFERS:

- Yes
I am answering yes, but will admit that I do not know a lot about this issue, and would like to learn more.

12) RANKED CHOICE VOTING:

- yes
- The supporters of Ranked Choice Voting have for years asked that a study be initiated in order to gain a better understanding of the

obstacles in the way of moving forward here in Connecticut, as well as the benefits. I have been strongly supportive of this effort and will remain so if re-elected.