



2020 Candidate Survey on the Environment

Frank Smith Democrat
House , 118

1) 100% Zero Carbon:

Do you support codifying this legislation?

- Yes

We as a state need to set a model for the rest of the country in successfully promoting renewables and other green technology; offshore wind, increased solar deployment, incentives for electric cars (and supporting further expansion of the charging infrastructure), smart zoning policies, especially for coastal communities, that take into effect the devastating impacts of climate change. It is frustrating to state the truth, that we already have many of the answers towards a clean energy economy, but face resistance. More research and innovation needs to continually take place, but we must put those plans into action. I believe that the costs associated with a transition to clean energy are more than offset by the public health and environmental benefits.

2) Environmental Justice:

Do you support the provisions that were contained in the Environmental Justice legislation?

- Yes

I live in a community in which minorities are under represented, yet I have seen first hand our community rise up to the occasion. I had the honor of participating in local demonstrations in opposition to racial disparity. Communities across the country are beginning to take action against racism... people are beginning to see that our root causes of disparity are more widespread than we as a society have been comfortable to admit. Until now. I have said publicly that climate change is the single largest threat to humanity, and that still remains the case even amid a global pandemic, racial tensions and economic turmoil. Different communities are disproportionately impacted by the

effects of climate change. Ignoring that reality would be to foreclose on solutions that we need to explore.

3) Municipal Funding Option :

Would you support legislation to allow, but not require, municipalities to establish a dedicated fund for local open space, farmland, water resources climate mitigation strategies through a limited conveyance fee on buyers of real estate?

- Yes

Yes, I wholeheartedly support this goal, and I support providing the options to municipalities for those goals. I have supported similar measures as an Alderman in Milford. I would also want to explore if there are other revenue diversification options for municipalities for similar purposes.

4) Bottle Bill :

Do you support modernizing Connecticut's bottle bill by 1) expanding the list of beverage containers accepted, 2) raising the deposit amount on covered containers, and 3) raising the handling fee paid to authorized dealers for each container they collect?

- Yes

I do support modernizing our bottle bill, and I agree that such laws have proved very effective at increasing the recycling rate. I am fully in support of this, but it is absolutely critical that we ensure handling fees are appropriately increased to levels that support the collections and processing for our retailers.

5) Climate Change Education:

Do you support a requirement to teach climate change education in public schools?

- Yes

As a long time Alderman representing a coastal community, I know full well that we need to address the long term AND the short term problems. In the last ten years alone, we have seen a dramatic rise in devastation to our public safety, public and private property, and our infrastructure. 100 year storms are seemingly becoming annual threats, and there is a cost associated with addressing them adequately. The alarming rejection of science and experts by some in this country is one of the largest threats to our society. Education on climate change is one of many critical interventions overcome this assault on proven science.

6) Transfer Act:

Do you support switching to a release-based cleanup program that would require sufficient DEEP oversight, mandated reporting of all cleanups and other safeguards to ensure a successful program that increases the number of sites cleaned?

- Yes

7) MDC Water:

Would you support legislation to require rates set by MDC to be approved by PURA (the state regulatory authority that sets rates for private water utilities)?

- Uncertain

It seems very concerning to me that 1) a very large water utility does not have appropriate regulatory oversight by PURA and 2) that a company is receiving discounts while citizens are subject to increases. I am not from a community that is an MDC member, so I would like to learn more about this topic. Based on what you articulated above, this seems like something I would absolutely support.

8) Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS):

Do you support advancing legislation that would prohibit PFAS chemicals wherever possible?

- Yes

9) Chlorpyrifos:

Will you support legislation to ban the sale and use of Chlorpyrifos in CT (as was the intent of House Bill 301 considered earlier this year)?

- Yes

10) No New Gas Infrastructure:

Will you oppose a tax on CT ratepayers to fund new gas pipelines?

- Yes

Climate change is one of my top priorities, so any assessment on our rate payers or taxpayers to further invest in fossil fuels is something that I would look at very critically. I would consider broad investment in fossil fuel expansion as being counter to our state's climate goals.

Open Question:

What environmental issues have you worked on? What will be your top environmental priority for the 2021 legislative session?

- Not only my top “environmental priority”... climate change and mitigating the effects of climate change is one of my top priorities, overall. I see the increasingly costly and devastating effects that climate change has throughout the state, but particularly along coastal communities. Connecticut cannot solve the climate crisis on our own, but it is incumbent on us to set a model for the rest of the country to follow.

I have been a member of Milford’s Inland Wetlands Agency and active with the Milford Environmental Concerns Coalition, and as a member of the Board of Aldermen I have introduced and led open space and other conservation initiatives.

Additional Comments:

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