

2012 Candidate Survey



- Email your completed survey to: elections@ctlc.org
- Please attach a biography
- Please complete this survey by July 1, 2012. Thank you!

Candidate Name: Christopher Phelps

Running for: House Senate District No: 32 Party: Democrat

Candidate/Campaign Mailing Address: 146 Ames Hollow Road, Portland, CT 06480

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Are you enrolled in the Citizen's Election Fund for public campaign financing? Yes No

Do you have a primary? Yes No

Are you an incumbent? Yes No

Part 1: If elected, what position do you expect to take on the following environmental issues?

Topic	Question	Support	Uncertain	Oppose
1. DEEP Operations (funding) <small>(Click Here for more information)</small>	Currently, all revenues collected by CT DEEP through permits, licenses, and admissions fees go to the General Fund and do not support DEEP operations. Would you support creation or re-institution of a fund within DEEP that enabled it to recoup revenues from hunting permits, special licenses, parks admissions, etc.?	Yes		
Comments: Connecticut's environmental protection agency has been chronically underfunded for decades. As an advocate, I worked for increased funding for environmental protection and conservation of our state's natural resources. If elected, I will work to ensure that the agency's work to protect our environment is fully funded. Dedicating the revenue generated by our natural resources for protection of those resources is simply common sense.				
2. Transportation and Mass Transit. <small>(Click Here for more information)</small>	Would you support policies or legislation to promote transit-oriented development that focuses growth and dense development around transit stations while respecting the unique character of each of our 169 cities and towns?	Yes		
Comments:				

Topic	Question	Support	Uncertain	Oppose
3. Riverfront Protection (Click Here for more information)	Would you support a statewide system of protective vegetated buffers along the state's rivers and streams (with exemptions for built-up areas, agriculture and other special situations)?	Yes		
Comments: As an advocate, my colleagues in Massachusetts worked to pass legislation protecting rivers in that state. I believe enacting similar protections for Connecticut's rivers and streams should be a top environmental priority.				
4. Pesticides Rollback (Click Here for more information)	Would you support and protect the current ban on toxic pesticides on school grounds?	Yes		
Comments: As an advocate, I worked for passage of this law. As a Board of Education Chairman, I know first-hand that it works. I will oppose any efforts to weaken the law.				
5. Pharmaceutical Disposal (Click Here for more information)	Would you support a statewide program that allows Connecticut's residents to have a safe and secure place to dispose of unused pharmaceutical drugs?	Yes		
Comments:				
6. GMO Labeling (Click Here for more information)	Would you support mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods, also known as GMO?	Yes		
Comments: I believe that consumers have a right to know whether the foods they are purchasing have been genetically modified. I have advocated for this policy and will continue to support it if elected.				
7. Mattress Recycling (Click Here for more information)	Would you support requiring manufactures to create a system for mattress-component recycling similar to the systems for recycling electric waste and the unused paint?	Yes		
Comments:				
8. Water Conservation (Click Here for more information)	Would you support efficient use and planning of water supplies by providing incentives for utilities to encourage water conservation through ratemaking mechanisms?	Yes		
Comments:				
9. Toxics (children) (Click Here for more information)	Would you support legislation that creates a process that identifies chemicals of high concern to children and makes recommendations how to reduce their exposure?	Yes		
Comments: Over 20 years ago, I spent a summer knocking on doors in support of the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act. I strongly support similar policy initiatives here in Connecticut.				
10. Community Redevelopment and Conservation Act (CRCA) (Click Here for more information)	Would you support an optional conveyance tax for municipalities on buyers of real property to be used within the municipality for preservation and conservation of land, air, water, and energy resources?	Maybe		
Comments: I found no information about this proposal by following the provided link. I strongly support the stated goal of helping municipalities conserve local natural resources. An optional new local tax is unlikely be a practical or effective method of achieving that goal in towns like Portland and Cromwell. Therefore, this proposal would appear to have little or no benefit to my district. Although I could support this option for towns that want to pursue it, my priority will be policies that can help towns like Cromwell and Portland protect local natural resources.				

Part 2: What environmental issue has lacked the attention in Connecticut that it deserves? As a legislator, what will you do to change that? What are the environmental priorities in your district?

There are many environmental issues that I believe should be priorities. But one that I think deserves greater attention in our state is the preservation and reclamation of local farmland. Connecticut can be a state where, unlike some states around the country, AG interests and environmental protection advocates are allies, not adversaries. As a legislator, I will work for policies to make preservation of local agricultural landscapes a greater priority. I will also look to work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to promote efforts to strengthen agriculture in our state in ways that also further other environmental goals such as protection of rivers and streams.

Local farms and agricultural businesses are important in my district. This includes businesses like nurseries. Protection of rivers and streams is also of importance to many residents with whom I've spoken. What I hear most often when talking to voters is that they want to see greater effort to leverage our incredible, but largely untapped, natural resources for recreation and to enhance the quality of life in our communities. In particular, the Connecticut Riverfront in both Cromwell and Portland has significant potential for recreational use, but at the same time, there needs to be greater emphasis on reducing the impact to the river of development along its shore. As a legislator, I would like to work with stakeholders from the environmental & business community to pursue ideas that can better harness the potential of our location along the Connecticut River to improve the quality of life for our residents.

Part 3: If you are elected and you could choose only one environmental issue to address, which *ONE* of the following issues would be your priority for the 2013 Legislative Session?

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DEEP Funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides Rollback | <input type="checkbox"/> Mattress Recycling | <input type="checkbox"/> CRCA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation & Mass Transit | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical Disposal | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Riverfront Protection | <input type="checkbox"/> GMO labeling | <input type="checkbox"/> Toxics (children) | |

Explain Why: Anyone who knows me knows that, if I'm elected, it is a safe bet that I will not have just one environmental priority in any given legislative session. I never limited myself to just one issue in any of my 9 sessions as an environmental advocate, so why start now? But, if I really did have to pick just one of these issues, it would be River protection. Once the fragile lands along our rivers and streams are lost, they are lost for good. The resulting harm to wildlife, water quality, and the quality of life in the communities through which these rivers and streams flow is a serious problem. We need a concerted effort to finally enact strong protections for Connecticut's fragile rivers and streams and I also believe this can be done in a way that is sensitive to the needs of other stakeholders such as the agricultural community.

Lastly, I want to say that I am astonished that clean air, clean energy, and global warming are not mentioned at all on this questionnaire. These are some of the most important environmental issues of our time and it is disappointing to me to see them not being addressed by the League. In particular, I do not see how it is possible in 2012 to evaluate a candidate's commitment to environmental protection without knowing their position on policies to cut carbon pollution and stop global warming. If elected, those issues will definitely be among my priorities.