

2014 Candidate Survey



CONNECTICUT LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS

- BEFORE YOU COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE SAVE IT TO YOUR COMPUTER AND USE THAT FILE TO RETURN TO US.
- Please complete this survey by August 1, 2014.
- Email your completed survey to: ctlcv@ctlcv.org

Candidate Name: Eric C. Berthel

Running for: House Senate District No: 68th Party: Republican

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

Do you have a primary? Yes _____ No X

Are you an incumbent? Yes _____ No X

Part 1: If elected, what position do you expect to take on the following environmental issues?
 Please mark boxes named "Support," "Uncertain," and "Oppose" with an x.

Topic	Question	Support	Uncertain	Oppose
Parks	Would you support state park and forest revenues going to park and forest operations and maintenance rather than to the General Fund?	X		
Comments: Yes, Park and Forest revenues should be used to support and maintain parks and forests, not the general fund, as long as the balance between the revenue and spending are close to being balanced.				
Transportation	CT is one of the 10 states most dependent on federal funds as a percentage of their transportation expenditures. More than half of the states and localities have moved forward on increasing their funding share. Do you favor this and how might we do it in CT?	X		

<p>Comments: Our Governor and Congressional delegation should continue to fight for our fair share of federal funding. In addition, I believe that the state should stop raiding the transportation fund. I would have supported a measure that requires all revenues in the Transportation Fund to be used for transportation purposes. However, that provision does not go into effect until July 2015. It should be made effective on the first day of the next session. I support working within the tax structure as it currently exists - to find ways to maintain what is supposed to go toward transportation and to possibly increase that amount.</p>				
<p>Property Tax Reform</p>	<p>CT's property tax burdens small towns, strangles cities, undermines mass transit and drives sprawl. Would you be an advocate on behalf of the environment in the tax reform debate, especially with regards to property tax?</p>	<p>X</p>		
<p>Comments: I would have supported more money for cities and towns in every Republican budget alternative. In fact in this past session, the Republicans attempted to re-create the Municipal Revenue Sharing Account, which the Governor created and then quickly abandoned. This would have been a good first step to providing municipalities with another source of revenue - a portion of the sales tax. Unfortunately, Democrats rejected this proposal, so now the portion of the sales tax that they promised to send to cities and towns goes to the state's General Fund.</p>				

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Uncertain</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
Pesticides	The American Academy of Pediatrics and many other science and medical institutions have warned that pesticides (including herbicides) are harmful to human and ecological health. CT has a ban on use of lawn care pesticides on grounds of elementary and middle schools. Would you support legislation to extend this ban to high schools and public parks where children play?	X		
<p>Comments: In its study, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) also stated that, "Ongoing research describing toxicologic vulnerabilities and exposure factors across the life span are needed to inform regulatory needs and appropriate interventions." None of the recommendations from the AAP calls for a ban on these chemicals. We would be better served by looking at some of the recommendations that the AAP did make: education, marketing, labeling, reporting, safety.</p>				
Pesticides	Should towns have more authority to limit or guide pesticide applications within their borders, including roadside spraying and applications of pesticides in wetlands and surface water?			X
<p>Comments: We should study this topic more. It comes down to local control to a certain extent; however, some towns have more state-owned property than others, and we would want the state to maintain control over decisions about state property. It might make more sense to have one consistent policy; otherwise, you might end up with one set of rules for one road/property and another set of rules for a road/property right next to the other.</p>				
Water Source Protection	CT normally uses decades old data for setting standards and guidance for stormwater management. Would you support requiring the state to upgrade its standards using scientifically validated, up-to-date statistics on volumes of water associated with extreme storms and annual precipitation?	X		
<p>Comments: Whether it has to do with water in extreme storms or any other topic, we should always have the most up-to-date, as well as unbiased statistics that we can reasonably get, with the understanding that our state budget is limited. Whether or not standards should be upgraded will depend on what the more recent statistics indicate.</p>				

Microbeads	Many personal care products such as shampoos and toothpaste are being manufactured using tiny plastic microbeads. Once microbeads are washed down the drain, they can enter lakes, rivers, and eventually the ocean through sewage overflows or pass through sewage treatment plants. Microbeads, like other plastics, can absorb toxic chemicals. They can be mistaken for food by aquatic life and can be passed up the food chain to larger fish, wildlife, and humans. Would you support legislation to protect our waterways from this new environmental threat?	X		
Comments: Yes, but only if companies don't take action on their own first. It appears that many of the manufactures (such as Connecticut-based Unilever) of products that use microbeads are already taking steps to remove them. They just want a few years to phase them out and to try to develop environmentally-friendly alternatives. One concern is that if we ban microbeads immediately, it will impact jobs and our economy. We should give companies the benefit of the doubt and give them time to phase out microbeads. If they don't live up to that pledge, we can take another look at what can be done through legislation to compel a ban on the products.				
Conservation Lands	Would you support passing a state Constitutional Amendment to better protect state conservation lands from being given away for non-conservation purposes?	X		
Comments: An amendment such as this one would be superficial. State lands could easily be reclassified as non-conservation lands, and in some cases, this could happen for good reason. Once the land is reclassified, it could be used for whatever purpose the state decides.				
Energy	Would you support policies or legislation to protect and expand the state's cost-effective energy efficiency programs opposing any attempts to raid the CT Energy Efficiency Fund for state budgetary needs?	X		
Comments: Yes. The House Republicans have made such proposals in past budgets, only to be rejected by Democrats. House Republicans also proposed restoring money Democrats raided from the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority (CEFIA).				
Energy	While other states promote shared net metering and sub metering for solar, fuel cell and other distributed renewable sources, CT imposes regulatory barriers that effectively prevent development of these projects in our state. Would you support legislation that removes these barriers and enable clean renewable distributed generation to move forward?	X		
Comments: Yes				
Toxins	Would you support legislation that requires the Department of Public Health to identify chemicals of high concern to children, manufacturer disclosure of those chemicals and a process for recommendations to reduce exposure?	X		
Comments: Businesses should be involved and should have formal input during the process of identifying products. And, affected business should be given the opportunity to appeal in cases where their products are identified. We have to come up with policies that are balanced - that take into consideration the severity of public health concerns as well as the amount of damage that can be done to our economy or a particular business. In addition, we should take into consideration DPH's ability to regulate (monitor and enforce) this kind of regulation. In some cases, the regulations are too burdensome to be enforced.				



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

Part 3: What are the environmental priorities in your district?

The issues previously discussed are all priorities in my district.

**Part 4: If you are elected, what would be your top environmental priorities for the 2014 legislative session?
Please identify up to three and rank the three in order 1, 2, or 3:**

- Parks
- 2 Transportation
- 3 Pesticides
- 5 Water Source Protection
- Microbeads
- Conservation Lands
- 4 Energy
- Toxins
- 1 Property Tax Reform
- Other (please explain)

Comments: