



2020 Candidate Survey on the Environment

Brian Smith Democrat
House , 48

1) 100% Zero Carbon:

Do you support codifying this legislation?

- Uncertain

I whole heartedly support this goal, however, I do have concerns about the impact this would have on projects that have already been approved which might as a result be cancelled resulting in significant lost employment opportunities, particularly as this time when unemployment is so high due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2) Environmental Justice:

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

- Yes

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

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, however, have serious concerns about doubling this fee at the present time, when so many are unemployed and when, at the same

time and due to COVID-19, some businesses are limiting the number of returns people may bring in to redeem at any one time.

5) Climate Change Education:

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

- Yes
Yes, I am a cosponsor of the bill.

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)?

- Yes

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)?

- Uncertain
I believe I need to study this a little bit more and therefore am hesitant to provide a definitive answer at this time. Among the things I need to learn is what alternatives are available to our state's agricultural community. I understand that on a national level, the agricultural

industry is against this ban, but is that also true of our state's smaller, family-owned farms?

10) No New Gas Infrastructure:

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

- Yes

As noted above, however, I have reservations about the possibility of cancelling previously-approved projects that are set to begin, or which are already under, construction due to the negative impact this would have on employment at a time of significant economic distress.

Open Question:

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

- I was elected in a January 2020 Special election and, thus, had little in the General Assembly this year prior to the Capitol closure due to COVID-19. As mentioned above, I am a cosponsor of the bill to mandate climate change education in our schools. I also cosponsored the bill to validate the 12/10/19 referendum in Regional School District No. 19, to ensure that the solar panel project at E.O. Smith High School could proceed as scheduled. Other bills, I was watching closely with view to cosponsoring included HB-5137, An Act Expanding the Property Tax Exemption for Certain Residential Renewable Energy Sources and Nonresidential Hydropower Facilities, and separate bills to exempt Senior Citizens and Veterans from the Passport to the Parks Motor Vehicle Registration Fee, which had effectively imposed the fee on these groups when they had previously been exempted from all entry fees at Connecticut's state parks.

Additional Comments:

- I am a strong believer in environmental causes. I have some concerns about a couple of initiatives that, were they to go forward at this time, might add to the financial hardships that many in our state are currently undergoing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this response. I hope you will accept my sincere apology for completing it two days late.