

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: Aundré Bumgardner

Running for: State Representative District No: 41 Party: GOP

Candidate/Campaign Mailing Address: aundrebumgardner@gmail.com

Phone: 860-961-9048 Website: aundrebumgardner.com aundrebumgardner@gmail.com Email:

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?
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?	YES		
Comments: I strongly support the above-mentioned revenues entirely dedicated to park maintenance. Such revenues should never be used as a slush fund to pay for things that often undermine conservation values.				
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?	YES		

Comments:

Connecticut has the nation's second-highest percentage of major roads – 48% in poor condition. This can best be seen on state-owned local (urban) arterials – where poor infrastructure devoid of sufficient sidewalks or bicycle lanes exacerbates the economic decline of our urban centers. For this reason, I support a constitutional amendment banning the practice of shifting special transportation fund (STF) revenues to the General Fund. Often less discussed is the fact that Connecticut spends about 23% of it's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) on road and bridge expansion – a much higher proportion than what neighboring states New York and Massachusetts spend on increasing road capacity. The great irony is that Massachusetts and New York's transportation network includes tolls -- so by and large, Connecticut taxpayers currently subsidize heavy users' driving habits, as well as out of state drivers, and large trucks that do very significant damage to our highways. Because of this, Connecticut must focus on improving transit service (transit that does not pose an environmental threat to the environment like the Hartford-New Britain BRT system which could have been LRT instead), increasing rail service such as a Shoreline East expansion (new stops in Niantic, Groton, Stonington and going into the Rhode Island border at Westerly), supporting the Central Corridor Rail line (which would increase freight capacity, open New London's port to new markets, and introduce passenger rail service in Eastern Connecticut) and oppose new roadway construction (high-speed routes and interstates) construction or highway widening projects. At a minimum, the state should re-establish tolls on state borders, and perhaps explore expanding that to congestion pricing in areas served by extensive transit corridors (I-95/MetroNorth). Creating such user fees limit suburban sprawl, and are built on sound economics. In all, our state must commit to sufficiently investing in our infrastructure without taking on a significant debt, like it is doing now.

Property Tax Reform	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?	YES		
----------------------------	--	-----	--	--

Comments:

I consider myself a strong advocate for allowing cities to replace the regressive property tax with a land value tax. Such a tax is not just built on free market principles but would transform our cities into denser, more sustainable places to live.

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Question</i>	Support	Uncertain	Oppose
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?	YES		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>My late grandfather (also a pediatrician) taught me the importance of exploring the great outdoors, staying active, and most importantly, knowing how to make a garden beautiful while sustainable for our planet. He refused to use pesticides and herbicides on his property, because of his fear that I would get sick if I played outside, and it's potential harm to dogs and native animals. I support this ban because if those pesticides are harmful to children, they're harmful to everyone, and everything. Additionally, the current policy does not extend the restriction to privately owned property, so it cannot be criticized as an additional mandate to land owners. By making this required for all public parks, it shows that our state is committed to ensuring that our parks and athletic fields remain safe for all users, including curious children and critters who deserve to explore a healthy environment.</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?	YES		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The state and municipalities subsidize (to a great extent) storm-water systems, so private citizens should not have an unfetter ability to freely use a product that significantly damages our publically protected wetlands via such infrastructure. Due to sprawl, development has grown in environmentally vulnerable areas that suffer because of poor planning. When this happens, heavy pesticide use follows. Connecticut towns should have every authority to guide pesticide applications</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?	YES		
Comments: As sea levels continue to rise, Connecticut must utilize and deploy the most effective technology possible in order to combat the threat of extreme weather.				
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?	YES		
Comments: Microbeads pose a threat to the great number of fish that inhabit both the Long Island sound and Thames River. We must protect these assets, and I will support any such legislation that mitigates that threat.				
Conservation Lands	Would you support passing a state Constitutional Amendment to better protect state conservation lands from being given away for non-conservation purposes?	YES		
Comments: State owned lands intended for public protection should never be sold for non-conservation purposes. If the state of Connecticut ever attempted to allude the public to believing that such a decision was to do a lack of revenue, they ought to be reminded that there are state owned parking lots in downtown Hartford as well as vacant and derelict parcels (land under the Gold Star Highway in New London) that serve absolutely no purpose.				
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?	YES		
Comments: I would oppose any attempt to raid the CT Energy Efficiency Fund but I believe that there should be greater scrutiny for the tax credit structure and should explore why so few people who may not have the capacity to afford such technologies do purchase solar panels for their home.				
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?	YES		
Comments: Connecticut must be in the business of leveling the playing field for alternative energy companies. My frustration is that users of solar energy for example, are often individuals who have the knowledge to navigate the credit process. Eliminating regulatory barriers to that market will make renewable energy more easily accessible, and equitable.				

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?	YES		
Comments: While I am a fierce proponent of limited government intervention into private sector decision making, I believe that it is state government's duty to require full disclosure on methods and chemicals used in the product that pose a health threat to the public. This should especially be done with foods, such as GMOs.				



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

The largest environmental issue is the suburbanization of our state. It is very difficult to get to and from any point in Connecticut without access to a motor vehicle. As a result, policy makers must take comprehensive steps to reverse this trend because continuing the status quo will put the state at a competitive disadvantage to other states, all the while destroying our environmental assets. Ways to mitigate this downward trend include reforming zoning laws such as eliminating both minimum parking requirements and providing hidden subsidies to sprawl producers. Connecticut must also make great strides developing a more robust, interconnected non-motor vehicle transportation network by increasing rail access in dense areas instead of increasing highway capacity. If elected, I will unequivocally support policies that foster smart growth development which should in turn, make our cities and towns more attractive, affordable and vibrant places to live, work, and recreate. Additionally, I will support legislation that better aligns roadway design guidelines with current state laws that endorse sustainable transportation planning. Additionally, I will support any legislation that removes barriers that disincentive individuals from building dense, transit oriented development in our cities.

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

Compared to most house districts, the 41st district is home to a significant number of Connecticut's environmental assets. The district straddles the mouth of the Thames River, which serves as the watershed to Southeastern Connecticut. The district is also home to Bluff Point a state park. From Ocean Beach Park to downtown Mystic, it is no coincidence that the 41st district is the tourism capital of the state of Connecticut. It's without question, that the diverse people who reside in such a beautiful district deserve an individual who will fight for protecting their environment in the legislature.

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

Comments:

While my opponent and I sharply disagree on a great number of issues, I'm content in knowing that regardless of the outcome this November, the 41st district will have an individual who votes with our environment in mind. I do believe however, that I can more effectively articulate an environmentally conscious vision for the state, and am eager to fight for policies that support conservation and sustainable development. If elected, I would also like to leverage my environmental views within my caucus, so that I could enlighten more individuals in supporting pro-conservation legislation. I commend individuals such Representative Gail Lavielle, a person I most admire and serves as a living example of conservation stewardship transcending party affiliation.

Interestingly enough, early age environmental advocacy led me to getting interested and subsequently involved in politics. It began at age 9, when I founded the Save the Earth Club at the Regional Multicultural Magnet in New London before attending the UN's International Children's Conference held at Connecticut College in 2004. Now a candidate for State Representative, I continue to be an unwavering conservationist. In addition, I have attached an op-ed I co-wrote with the now Chief Administrative Officer for the city of New London about how the city could save significantly on increasing the recycling rate, and deploy innovative solutions like utilizing locally produced food waste as a means to power a neighborhood. I ask that your organization consider me for your endorsement, with great gratitude.

Aundré P. Bumgardner