



## 2024 Candidate Survey on the Environment

**Ellen Fox, Democrat**  
**House District 131**

### 1) **Open Question:**

In 2022-2023, I spearheaded a community effort to resist a fourth crematorium from coming into Oxford, CT within a 3 mile radius. Two other crematoriums, one pet and one human, are less than a mile away and another human crematorium is just two miles down the road in Middlebury. Additionally, within this concentrated area of the proposed crematorium, we have CPV Towantic Power Plant and Waterbury Airport. A third crematorium coming into the neighborhood would have presented a public health and safety hazard for everyone living and working in close proximity. One residence was just 600 feet away and other homes and businesses were almost as close to the intended site. These environmental contaminants negatively impact all aspects of the environment: the air we breathe, the water we drink, the crops we grow, our livestock and our farms. From a human standpoint, it is heart-wrenching and disturbing to know that the smoke we inhale, even now, is from the incineration of people. We opposed adding another smokestack business to the Woodruff Hill Industrial Park.

Scientific evidence shows crematoriums release numerous toxins and pollutants into the air. When smoke from the stacks is released, rather than traveling in a straight line upwards, plumes of thick emissions travel to the surrounding area beyond the property line of a crematorium ending up in our backyards. When mercury from dental filings and implants is exposed to intense heat from the cremation process, the emission of a colorless, odorless gas and particulate matter along with sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and carbon monoxide enter the atmosphere. The EPA confirms that there are serious health effects from even low-level exposure to mercury including concerns for the brain, kidneys, and lungs and have been linked to cancer.

I was worried about the equipment malfunctioning as these facilities do not have mandatory and regular inspections and are unregulated. Oxford should not have to bear the heaviest pollution burden from the cumulative

impacts of crematory emissions. We are already dealing with air pollution from the other crematoriums, the power plant, and the airport.

We fought hard but the crematorium owner was litigious and although Planning and Zoning denied their application, they took it to court and won so we are getting this in my neighborhood.

My top environmental priority for my district will be to protect the three towns in the 131st: Oxford, Naugatuck, and Southbury from more air polluters. Caps need to be put on the number of companies that can come into a residential area as these industries are unhealthy.

## **2) Climate:**

**Will you support paying for increased investments in clean energy and our electric grid infrastructure to ensure a healthy environment that will reduce reliance on fossil fuel and nuclear energy (and ultimately reduce costs to ratepayers)?**

- Yes

We are in a climate crisis! We must push for clean energy sources. Living in a HOA regulated community, a bill was nearly passed into law allowing for solar panels on homes. The CT Senate killed the bill. I have neighbors in my community requesting I push back and try to get this bill passed, if elected.

## **3) Nature-Based Solutions:**

**Will you support a stand-alone bill that authorizes and prioritizes the use of nature-based solutions (forests, trees, wetlands, riparian buffers, healthy organic soils, and other natural ecosystems) as the preferred alternative, where appropriate, across all agencies?**

- Yes

Policies need to be enacted to restore natural habitats, including wetlands, forests, and coastal areas. Greenhouse gas emissions need to be reduced across many industries and more incentives need to be given to those who seek nature-based solutions for energy efficiency. I would support educational programs and promoting public awareness about climate change and biodiversity along with mitigation efforts to clean up brownfields, etc.

## **4) Clean Cars and Trucks Emissions Standards:**

**Do you support Connecticut's adoption of the latest California emissions standards for cars and trucks?**

- Unsure

I do not know enough about this topic and would like to learn more. I'm honestly curious to know if our existing antiquated electric grid could support an increase in electricity from EV's.

**5) Environmental Rights Amendment:**

**Will you support an Environmental Rights Amendment to our State Constitution?**

- Yes

I support an Environmental Rights Amendment being added to our State's Constitution. Doing so protects CT for generations to come.

**6) Food Waste Diversion:**

**Will you support designating food scraps as a "recyclable" item and requiring large-scale food generators to create plans to donate edible food?**

- Yes

I volunteer at a Seymour Oxford Food Bank and am a member of All in For Oxford. I believe strongly in repurposing food for human consumption. There is so much food waste and people are hungry. Agencies like Haven's Harvest work to capture food and redirect it from landfills to feed our communities most vulnerable members.

**7) Neonicotinoids:**

**Will you help push for legislation to ban the sale and use of neonics for non-agricultural use in Connecticut?**

- Yes

Neonics need to be regulated. Bees, butterflies, birds are all negatively impacted from these pesticides! We need to pass a law to ban the sale and use.

**8) Rodenticides:**

**Will you support banning the use of certain rodenticides, with a few well-defined exceptions, to help prevent the deaths of its unintended victims?**

- Yes

As long as the alternatives to certain rodenticides are effective and can take care of an infestation of rodents, I am in favor of this legislation. Need to know more.

**9) Environmental Justice:**

**Will you support a legislative fix to Connecticut's Environmental Justice statutes to include all polluting facilities?**

- Yes

Absolutely!!! Yes!!! 100%!!

**10) Bears:**

**Will you support legislation that requires humane responses to conflicts with wildlife such as providing better support for the public seeking help, removing attractants, minimizing shooting incidents, and strengthening programs to deal with orphaned wildlife?**

- Yes  
My neighborhood has many bears. We've taken over their land and they're out placed. It breaks my heart to see them passing through my property as developments continue to be built. I abhor the idea of shooting bears and these beautiful animals need to be relocated or something. It's just so sad.

**11) Tree Cutting Protocols:**

**Will you support legislation to require stronger science-based tree cutting protocols based on conservation values?**

- Unsure  
This is another question that I'm unfamiliar with. I live in a very rural area where overhanging trees interfere with power lines. Often times, during storms, trees end up falling on the lines causing roads to close and electricity outages. I'm not in favor of taking down trees but do see a need to cut back trees that are hanging over wires.

**12) Ranked Choice Voting:**

**Should Connecticut pursue Ranked Choice Voting?**

- Unsure  
This is a very complicated question for me to answer. I personally believe in Ranked Choice Voting.  
As a Registrar of Voters, I do not know if the new tabulators being considered by the Secretary of the States office will allow for RCV. The State is investing a considerable amount of money in new equipment for the 169 towns. Some of the tabulators do not allow for RCV. It would depend on the technology and its capabilities. This is an extremely complicated question and one that can not be answered in a few sentences. Registrars of Voters have been jumping through hoops with early voting. A new CT Voter Registration System is being rolled out in 2015 as are new tabulators. There are a lot of balls in the air with this.

**CANDIDATE COMMITMENT TO WORK ON ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION**

If you support any or all of our top priority legislation during the 2025 session, will you add your name as a legislative co-sponsor?

- Yes

Will you plan to attend our annual Environmental Summit in January?

- Yes

If requested, will you meet with CTLCV at least once during the legislative session to review priority legislation?

- Yes

It would be an honor to meet with the CTLCV, if elected!