



2022 Candidate Survey on the Environment

Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox Democrat
House , 123

OPEN QUESTION

The environment matters to me because I want to give my children and future grandchildren a world in which they are able to live. Doing so means recognizing the clear and present danger that climate change presents to us. The lack of sufficient means to reduce carbon emissions at the rate required is the issue that most concerns me. As a scholar and teacher of the US constitution, what concerns me most now about that issue is the recent Supreme Court ruling in West Virginia v. EPA, and whether the reduced enforcement power of the EPA will necessitate further state action.

1) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:

- Yes
Connecticut's environmental justice law was groundbreaking when it passed, and the 2020 legislation updated it to give minority communities a greater amount of influence on the placement of power plants and other potential polluters. However, we should work in particular to increase fines and enforcement of the existing laws.

2) WASTE MANAGEMENT:

- Yes
The other issue that is related to waste management is the ineffectiveness of our recycling programs. In particular, I would like to see increases in our bottle deposits to make them more in line with European countries, which have much higher return rates. This in turn would keep a great deal of recyclable plastic and glass out of our landfills.

3) POLYSTYRENE:

- Yes
Senate Bill 118 (2022), which passed the Senate but did not come to a vote in the house, would have done much of this. There is no reason to

continue our use of polystyrene when it is so harmful and there are perfectly reasonable, and recyclable, substitutes.

4) PFAS:

- Yes
The nationwide health advisory issued by the EPA last month which, based on substantial research, cut the "safe" level of PFAS (and the Connecticut standards which were also changed as a consequence), should be a wake up call to all of us to be aware of the potential contamination of our drinking water in particular.

5) NEONICOTINOIDS:

- Yes
Such a ban should be coupled with assistance for farmers in acquiring more expensive and more environmentally friendly alternatives.

6) RODENTICIDES:

- yes
It bears pointing out that rodenticides are also potentially harmful to children, in addition to birds of prey.

7) DIESEL BACKUP GENERATORS/DATA CENTERS:

- Yes
This a question of balance. We absolutely need to have competitive technology infrastructure in Connecticut, but there is no reason why this goal cannot be pursued in an environmentally sustainable way.

8) BEARS:

- yes
The bear shooting in Newtown in May, along with the general increase in the bear population, including in the Trumbull area, highlights the need for such legislation. We also need a greater need for DEEP to educate the public on how to handle the growing bear population.

9) TREE CUTTING PROTOCOLS:

- Yes
Obviously the safety of our communities and homes from fires and downed power lines is also important, but there is no reason why a plan that balances those needs with those of conservation cannot be devised.

10) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

- Yes

Why anyone could oppose legislation to merely allow consideration of such dedicated funds is beyond me. Whether a conveyance fee is the necessary mechanism for such a program could be a matter of debate (perhaps even such funds could also be collected through voluntary fundraising programs), but to allow communities the option to consider such an arrangement seems a clearly good idea.

11) RIPARIAN BUFFERS:

- Yes

The evidence for the importance of riparian buffers to reduce pollution and ensure the health of our waterways is quite compelling.

12) RANKED CHOICE VOTING:

- yes
- Ultimately, I think having a system that welcomes more than two parties is essential to maintaining the health of our democracy. But until structural changes make that possible, ranked choice voting better reflects the sentiments of the voters and also has the potential to reduce polarization and partisanship.