



2024 Candidate Survey on the Environment

Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox, Democrat
Senate District 22

1) Open Question:

My environmental advocacy comes through my role as Executive Director of the Oxford Consortium for Human Rights. In March 2024, we held a seminar for fifty students and faculty from around the world--including many from Connecticut Universities and Community Colleges--at Oxford University, entitled "Human Rights in Climate Emergency and War," which explored the interaction between climate, war, and displacements of people. In addition, we assisted students in developing community action plans to take home and implement in their own communities to fight climate change. This followed up on a seminar on Activism at Sonoma State University in California, which included a unit on climate change activism. My primary concern is to leverage state policy to combat climate change, primarily by finding ways to expand state incentive and subsidy programs to offer more generous incentives for solar installation, and to fix the infrastructural issues that are providing headwinds to our attempts to use offshore wind.

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

I would like to know more about the PURA docket. I've studied Connecticut's HB 5004 which seems to suggest a movement away from natural gas but the legislation seems vague to me about the purpose of the docket. I agree that we need to move away from fossil fuels and nuclear energy (the latter unless and until there is a meaningful solution to the problem of nuclear waste).

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

I also think that the use of native plants, where available, is both a practical and sensible step.

4) Clean Cars and Trucks Emissions Standards:

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

- Yes

5) Environmental Rights Amendment:

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

- Yes

Since amendments that are not triggered from a Constitutional Convention require a three-fourths vote, the real question about any such amendment is how to procure sufficient votes for it to pass, and how such votes could be gleaned without watering down the text of the amendment too much.

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

7) Neonicotinoids:

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

- Yes

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

9) Environmental Justice:

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

- Yes
This has been a significant issue for decades for many of the constituents I will represent in the 22nd District.

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

11) Tree Cutting Protocols:

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

- Yes
As an aside, my father-in-law occasionally taught silviculture during his career as a forestry professor. Science-based protocols are a very good idea, but obviously the first concern when determining which trees need cutting must be public safety.

12) Ranked Choice Voting:

Should Connecticut pursue Ranked Choice Voting?

- Yes
I think pursuing truly independent Redistricting Commission and reducing barriers for third party access to the ballot and the CEP are more important than Ranked Choice Voting, but I support RCV.

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 I am available, I would be glad to come.

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

- Yes

