



## 2024 Candidate Survey on the Environment

**Paul Honig, Democrat**  
**Senate District 8**

### 1) Open Question:

I can't say that I've done a lot of environmental advocacy in the last two years. Since coming up short by less than 125 votes in the 2022 race for this senate seat I've concentrated on building relationships with Democrats in the district by helping them get elected in the municipals in 2023. I believe that this puts me in a good position to win this seat this year.

In the last 10 years, the issue that I've been most involved with is energy efficient buildings. In 2021, my wife and I built what we believe is the first new construction certified Passive House in CT. We promoted building this way through many house tours and a blog (<https://connecticutpassivehouse.blogspot.com/>) that has more than 85,000 lifetime page views.

I'm an avid listener to the Volts podcast where I hear about the good news of technological advances as we move to a zero carbon future. I recently listened to an episode detailing what Massachusetts is doing around providing incentives for builders of large buildings with affordable housing units to build to the Passive House standard. I'm very interested in working on bringing something like this to Connecticut.

### 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 need to learn more about nuclear energy and the environmental trade offs around it.

### 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

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

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

- Unsure

This is a tough one. I've been surprised at the number of people who bring this up when I'm out talking to voters. Many people who told me that they'll vote for me have expressed opposition to the idea of not being able to buy a new ICE vehicle in 2035. I think more public outreach has to happen. Republicans claim there is no plan. The retort to that claim has to be to explain what the plan is. I firmly believe that electric vehicle adoption is inevitable, mainly because electric vehicles are a much, much better product than ICE vehicles. The technology is improving rapidly, lowering prices and improving performance. But, the public needs to be swayed that as more and more of our fleet consists of EVs, our grid will be able to handle it, and there are ample chargers available for people's transportation needs. I'm interested in making sure that the appropriate parts of government have done the work that needs to be done to make this case to the public.

**5) Environmental Rights Amendment:**

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

- Yes

**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 support finding ways to divert food waste from the waste stream through donation, composting and anaerobic digestion. I'm a little unsure of what it means to designate food scraps as a recyclable item for individuals.

**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

**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

I attended one of the DEEP presentations on bears in Simsbury. I learned several important facts:

Connecticut has ample habitat to accommodate the current bear population and has room for significant growth in the population. The availability of human food has accelerated the increase in population. Females become sexually mature earlier. Litters are bigger. More cubs are surviving.

Human/bear conflicts are the direct result of habituation.

Habituation occurs every time a bear successfully gets food out of a trash can, bird feeder, garage refrigerator, etc.

A bear hunt alone is no silver bullet.

While I am not categorically opposed to a bear hunt, I know that reducing habituation with humans is the essential element in reducing conflicts.

**11) Tree Cutting Protocols:**

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

- Yes

## 12) Ranked Choice Voting:

### Should Connecticut pursue Ranked Choice Voting?

- Yes

I enthusiastically support Rank Choice Voting. I was a founding member of Voter Choice CT, a single issue grassroots organization dedicated to bringing Rank Choice Voting to CT. I testified at public hearings, lobbied legislators, and wrote letters to the editor promoting RCV. After our efforts, in 2019 a Rank Choice Voting study bill passed the house in CT's general assembly.

As a voter, I've experienced elections where I didn't even consider voting for a quality 3rd party candidate (Oz Griebel) for fear that my vote would be wasted and a terrible candidate would win because of it. In the same election year I witnessed the Republican primary for governor where the nominee won with only 29% of the vote in a 5 way race. 71% percent of voters had another candidate as their first choice. It would have been nice to see if another candidate had more broad-based public support. Rank Choice voting solves both these problems.

There are some technical issues to resolve before implementation. The first one that comes to mind for me is that all the individual ballots with first, second, third, etc. choices of each voter need to be gathered in a single location for counting. I'm confident this and other challenges can be resolved.

I will strongly support RCV in the state senate.

### **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

I'm happy to look at co-sponsoring once these become more defined

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

- Yes

I have attended several of these over the last few years and find them very useful.

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

- Yes

I'm happy to speak to CTLCV about any environmental issues they're working on.