



## 2024 Candidate Survey on the Environment

**Tony Hwang, Republican**  
**Senate District 28**

### 1) Open Question:

We need to constantly educate and advocate for protective and sustainable environmental policies and effectively pass legislation with collaboration and bipartisan support. I am proud to have actively supported policies to reduce our carbon footprint, fossil fuel use to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through released carbon into the atmosphere impacting climate change. In my role as ranking leader on the CGA Transportation Committee led bipartisan passage of PA 23-135.

- Starting by October 1, 2030, the act requires the DOT commissioner, in consultation with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner, to biennially establish a transportation carbon dioxide reduction target for the state that sets the maximum amount of carbon dioxide emissions allowed from the transportation sector. When setting the target, the commissioners must consider the state's long-term greenhouse gas emissions reductions requirements.

- CT DOT Vegetation Management Plan that requires DOT to develop, and revise as needed, guidelines on tree and vegetation management, removal, and replacement along state highways for its employees and contractors to use for maintenance and construction projects.

My top environmental priority for the 2025 legislative session will be to educate and address two concurrent crises—that climate change and loss of biodiversity are interdependent, and must be tackled simultaneously. Nature based solutions through Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) needs to be part of the solution set. I will advocate policies the encourage through conservation and/or sustainable management, and restore natural ecosystems, which in turn act as effective carbon stores and sinks that can actively pull carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and convert it into carbon that gets stored within plants and soils. I will work to revive the goals and proactive climate change legislation in HB 5004 and SB 11.

### 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 will support paying for increased investments in clean and renewable energy to ensure reduced reliance on fossil fuel that impact climate change through greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In my role as ranking leader in the CGA Transportation Committee led passage of PA 23-135 that partially addressed this issue.

**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

YES. A stand alone nature-based solution will be a powerful statement of CT's commitment to address climate change and biodiversity loss. It is my top environmental priority and it will encompass many of the issues important to long term sustainability. We will need to work with the Governor's office and various state agencies to ensure buy-in of nature-based solutions as a part of their policy agenda.

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

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

- Yes

I do support CT's adoption of the California emission standards for cars and trucks where EV and other non fossil fuel vehicles become mainstream standards on our roadways. This goal will help us toward meeting federal air quality standards and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. However, to effectively implement and actualize marketplace adoption, our energy and charging infrastructure "must" be significantly improved. Economic and social equity considerations must be addressed to ensure widespread and effective adoption.

**5) Environmental Rights Amendment:**

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

- Yes

I do and will enthusiastically support an Environmental Rights Amendment to our State Constitution. This process will be a challenging and multi-legislative session process that will ultimately require public referendum vote approval. I will work with CTLCV to factually share the need for such a Constitutional change to facilitate passage in the House and Senate and then help the public awareness campaign and garner support for referendum vote passage.

**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 a comprehensive food waste prevention and recycling law. The law must include best practices for robust food waste prevention, which includes complying with the EPA's wasted food scale, investing in public education around food waste prevention, empowering DEEP to develop effective enforcement and incentive mechanisms, and investing in local and regional infrastructure. With a strong food waste prevention law, Connecticut can fight food insecurity, curb toxic emissions, and save our communities money on trash disposal.

**7) Neonicotinoids:**

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

- Yes  
I will support state legislation to restrict the sale and use of neonics for non-agricultural use in CT and would push for federal regulations to ensure comprehensive and complete compliance.

**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  
Rodenticides are counterproductive to rodent control as they cannot be specific to their targets and are unsafe for the environment and CT's Birds of Prey are dying from rodenticide poisoning at alarming rates. I would support to ban SGARs (brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difenacoum and difethialone) and the FGAR diphacinone statewide. Well-defined exceptions includes: warehouses used to store foods for human or animal consumption;

agricultural food production sites; factories, breweries, or wineries; medical facilities, and drug and medical equipment manufacturing facilities.

**9) Environmental Justice:**

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

- Yes  
Environmental justice is the intersection between the fight for civil rights and for environmental health, ensuring marginalized communities have self determination and are no longer at the frontlines of activity that harms both the environment and public health. I supported PA 23-202 that directed the CT DEEP as well as the CT Siting Council to update certain public participation and public notice requirements. The bill language granted the ability to deny permits for new affecting facilities if it would result in significant cumulative environmental or public health impacts in a distressed community already overburdened with pollution. I will support a legislative adjustment to current environmental justice statute language to include all polluting facilities to complement recently passed legislation.

**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 will and have supported 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. Most incidents with bears are driven by habituation and human food sources, and public education is critical to reversing that trend.

**11) Tree Cutting Protocols:**

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

- Yes

I will support legislation to require stronger science-based tree cutting protocols. In my role as ranking leader on the CGA Transportation Committee led bipartisan passage of PA 23-135. This bill required a CT DOT Vegetation Management Plan that requires DOT to develop, and revise as needed, guidelines on tree and vegetation management, removal, and replacement along state highways for its employees and contractors to use for maintenance and construction projects. I am also working to ensure that our utilities give science-based tree-cutting protocols and respect private property rights and notification.

## **12) Ranked Choice Voting:**

### **Should Connecticut pursue Ranked Choice Voting?**

- Yes  
As the appointed bipartisan co-chair of the Governor's Rank Choice Voting Working Group, I have been actively engaged in public meetings to learn more about RCV. I am supportive of the concept for all of the reasons described by CTLCV. Our work group invited expert panelists and RCV practicing states and municipalities to better understand and potentially develop legislation that could implement RCV in CT. Our RCV work group will research, listen and hopefully avoid the criticism and pitfalls experienced by early adopters.

## **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  
Always ready to support and help CTLCV

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

- Yes  
An energizing and informative environmental gathering, I always enjoy attending.

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

- Yes  
Anytime and always available to CTLCV