



2024 Candidate Survey on the Environment

Rachel Khanna, Democrat
House District 149

1) Open Question:

Climate change poses a major threat to our state and, as a representative of two coastal towns, I am well aware of the urgency of addressing this crisis. In the last session, I co-sponsored important environmental bills, including the climate action bill (HB5004), the food waste diversion bill (SB191), and the PFAS bill (SB292). I have been active in communicating with the leadership of the Environment Committee about issues important to my constituents. And, in 2023, I joined the Climate Caucus.

In the 2025 session my top environmental priorities will be getting the climate bill and the neonicotinoid bill over the finish line.

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 was pleased to co-sponsor and vote for HB5004, the climate change action bill in the last legislative session, and glad that it passed the House. Unfortunately, it did not come up for a vote in the senate and was not addressed in the special session. I will be advocating for its passage in the next session. We cannot afford to delay.

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

Nature based solutions are a powerful tool to reverse both climate change and biodiversity loss. I was pleased that HB5004 included provisions for nature based solutions. It is imperative that we pass a similar bill in the next session.

4) Clean Cars and Trucks Emissions Standards:

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

- Yes
Connecticut cannot afford to adopt looser emissions standards. Air quality in my district frequently exceeds recommended levels of particle pollution and ozone. Connecticut must join neighboring states in the northeast and continue its long commitment to adopting CA emissions standards.

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
This is an issue that is important to my constituents, and to me. In 2023, I secured funds for a food waste diversion program in Greenwich Public Schools. In the 2024 legislative session, I was proud to co-sponsor SB191, the food waste diversion bill. As a cookbook author and someone who started a catering business I am familiar with how much food is wasted every day in the US. The cost of disposing of it keeps rising now that MIRA has closed, and driving it farther and farther to other states willing to accept Connecticut's waste is not sustainable. Innovative businesses to recycle food waste are springing up in Connecticut, but to thrive, they need a steady supply of foodstock. We can lower municipal costs, create jobs, and lower emissions by requiring the recycling of food waste.

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

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?

- Unsure

The Governor recently convened a working group on ranked choice voting, and as a member of the Government Administration & Elections committee, I am excited to learn more about how our state can benefit. In the 2023 legislative session, I voted in favor of holding a public hearing to learn more about ranked choice voting. Ranked choice voting has a proven track record in other countries and is gaining traction in the US, where it has been adopted in 62 jurisdictions. Certainly, there are important issues to be worked out, such as how to prevent delays in getting the results, and educating voters on how to use the new ballots. But the potential to boost turnout, create greater options for voter preferences, reduce spoiler effects, and prevent wasted votes is worth the effort.

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