



2020 Candidate Survey on the Environment

Patricia Wilson Pheanious Democrat
House , 53

1) 100% Zero Carbon:

Do you support codifying this legislation?

- Yes

I absolutely support certifying the 2019 executive order, as this further demonstrates a commitment to the articulated ideals. We have to continue our procurement of off shore wind and energy, working in concert with nearby states to issue a joint procurement. This would save money for everyone in the long term and encourage coordination with Massachusetts, Rhode Island and other New England states as they come on board.

2) Environmental Justice:

Do you support the provisions that were contained in the Environmental Justice legislation?

- Yes

Information is the start of a community's involvement in illuminating and positively impacting environmental injustice. Unfortunately the same communities that are discriminated against often lack political power and awareness. The provisions of the HB 5103 would provide a better opportunity for residents to learn about and advocate against unhealthy encroachments in their community or near their homes.

3) Municipal Funding Option :

Would you support legislation to allow, but not require, municipalities to establish a dedicated fund for local open space, farmland, water resources climate mitigation strategies through a limited conveyance fee on buyers of real estate?

- Yes

Absolutely I support this. Giving towns the ability to use a buyers conveyance fee program can help secure better options for the care of the open spaces, farmlands and water resources we are blessed with. Buyer conveyance fees in this instance would provide a built-in support funded by those who purchase homes in excess of \$150,000.

4) Bottle Bill :

Do you support modernizing Connecticut's bottle bill by 1) expanding the list of beverage containers accepted, 2) raising the deposit amount on covered containers, and 3) raising the handling fee paid to authorized dealers for each container they collect?

- Yes

I continue to support the progress of the upgraded bottle bill. It makes sense to support the bottle redemption infrastructure as we encourage productive returns and reuses. There may be some concerns that the increased fees should not be applied to family necessary items such as large glass juice or milk containers. I do not feel the same way about Soda however, because it lacks any nutritional value and in fact may contribute to health problems like diabetes. I think that applying an increased cost for these “unnecessary choice” bottles, may cut down on their use to the overall benefit of our health and reductions in health system costs.

5) Climate Change Education:

Do you support a requirement to teach climate change education in public schools?

- Yes

I definitely support the climate change curriculum mandate and can't understand why it can't be implemented within the context of existing science courses. I do recall the extensive debate involved in moving this legislation through the House and watching it fail in the Senate. There were many (to me, unreasonable, though apparently heartfelt) objections to “forcing” parents who might wish to teach a more religiously oriented version of things to deal with what is being taught in our schools. There were many concerns that the science of climate change not being 100% accepted (!!) and a variety of other concerns raising issues of cost and “unfunded” mandates. Getting a mandate passed through the Senate will continue to be difficult but its a goal well worth fighting for. Children will have to lead the world we leave them, and the curriculum we teach will prepare them—or not. Our future literally depends on the validity and force of the SCIENCE we

now teach our kids.

6) Transfer Act:

Do you support switching to a release-based cleanup program that would require sufficient DEEP oversight, mandated reporting of all cleanups and other safeguards to ensure a successful program that increases the number of sites cleaned?

- Yes

Yes. A standard that prioritizes public health in the Transfer Act is preferable to one that relates on the willingness and ability of buyers/sellers to abide by the law. The idea of prioritizing cleanup of toxic sites based on threat levels seems much more likely to insure a benefit to the public as a whole. Such a system would need to be carefully managed so that reports and outcomes could be accessible for the public's information, priority and monitoring of clean ups so that we can better safeguard lives.

7) MDC Water:

Would you support legislation to require rates set by MDC to be approved by PURA (the state regulatory authority that sets rates for private water utilities)?

- Yes

Absolutely Yes. In my limited experience MDC lacks transparency and accountability. The MDC Board is sometimes dismissive to the point of rudeness to public members who come to offer observations and opinions. They do not appear to be accountable for their decision making. Because there is no requirement to act on what they hear from the public, complaints go unanswered and there is no one to complain to. Public necessities like air, and water (and internet access, frankly) should not be privately owned. We see through the outcome of MDC's actions exactly who benefits from the transaction and who does not. The people do not benefit. Corporate welfare recipients like Niagara benefit at the expense of the public.

8) Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS):

Do you support advancing legislation that would prohibit PFAS chemicals wherever possible?

- Yes

I absolutely support the PFAS ban, but have heard from fire fighters that the ban on this type of foam will hamper their ability to fight fires effectively. Even so, I am in favor of banning the dangerous product and believe that a ban may actually stimulate research into safer products that are adequate and effective. Without such a ban, no one may search for such alternatives.

9) Chlorpyrifos:

Will you support legislation to ban the sale and use of Chlorpyrifos in CT (as was the intent of House Bill 301 considered earlier this year)?

- Uncertain

In the matter of Chlorpyrifos pesticides, I ultimately would support a ban but am not certain that I am in favor at this time. The danger is clear. Yet I have listened carefully to the fruit growers in my district who claim to have no effective alternative. Though they are aware of certain new methods, they do not find them sufficiently effective. They do not believe they can compete in interstate commerce when they are hampered by ineffective pesticides and other sellers do not have the same standard. I am hopeful that a next federal administration will return to the wisdom of the past and consider completing the issuance of a nationwide ban of these products. Such a move will force innovation and place all sellers on the same ground. A ban ultimately will encourage the development of agricultural methods that will not negatively affect the quality or sale of produce without placing Connecticut farmers at a severe disadvantage. I would also advocate farm based training about application and impact for producers and consumers so that the full danger of the use of these products can be evaluated by consumers.

10) No New Gas Infrastructure:

Will you oppose a tax on CT ratepayers to fund new gas pipelines?

- Yes

I believe that Connecticut should not be boxed into building new gas infrastructure. I am also keenly aware that about 1/3 of the people who would build such facilities will be out of work without them. It is important to insure that building trades workers can transition (through training and active placement efforts) into green industry infrastructure (e.g. solar and wind energy).

Legislative priorities for the future include supporting the bottle bill, advancing our work on crumbling foundations including reauthorization and re-funding of the CFSIC (I am now a co-chair of the bipartisan "Crumbling Foundation Caucus"). I will actively support efforts to require a racial impact study on environmental projects and other major expenditures of tax dollars.

Open Question:

What environmental issues have you worked on? What will be your top environmental priority for the 2021 legislative session?

- In addition to legislative initiatives that I have sponsored regarding road salt application and crumbling foundations, my substantive involvement in environmental issues is through an organization on whose board I have served for the last 17 years. CREA, The Center for Reflection, Education and Action is actively involved in making systemic change to improve the conditions of working people in America, Guatemala, in parts of Africa and the Caribbean. CREA's work on the environment is part of a basic mission to improve the economic and social environment of vulnerable people in our single world. The organization, whose motto is "the world is home to us all", has carried out more than 200 workshops using the text of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* (The Encyclical) —a masterful exploration of the impact of climate change in communities and the reasons for our dedicated stewardship of the world's natural resources so as to benefit all and not just some of us. My work at CREA has taught me to always ask the question "CUI BONO?" ("who benefits?") when I evaluate any program, policy or practice being proposed to impact poor people.

Additional Comments:

- Thank you for your consideration.