



2024 Candidate Survey on the Environment

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Senate District 30

1) Open Question:

I grew up in Washington, CT, and my earliest memory of environmental advocacy was the "Fight the Pipe" campaign to stop the Iroquois Pipeline in the 1980s. It is ironic now that a major issue in the district now is the compressor station on the Iroquois Pipeline, and I live about 6 miles down wind of the Cricket Valley plant, which is fueled by the Iroquois Pipeline. I have considered myself an environmentalist since

In recent years I've been vocal on a range of environmental issues in a variety of capacities: using non-lead ammunition for hunting; invasive species prevention and control; the CHPE project to bring hydro to NYC to reduce reliance on dirty "peaker" plants; road salt reductions; addressing our housing crisis by developing already developed areas; advocating for nuclear energy as part of an 'all of the above' clean energy portfolio; avoiding use of rodenticides; non-lethal ways of reducing conflicts with bears.

If elected, I'd be a strong environmental advocate in the Senate, and for that reason it is tough to say what my top priority would be. Getting a climate change bill through the Senate has to be a top priority, but dealing with the shutdown of MIRA is very important, increased support for DEEP to monitor air and water quality, filling the potential gap in environmental regulation following the Chevron decision gutting the EPA (and other agencies) are all important. I look forward to a discussion with CTLCV and others to develop the list of priorities.

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'm very disappointed that the climate legislation did not make it through the Senate this year. My opponent referred to its failure as a

"big victory" - <https://www.ctpublic.org/news/2024-05-09/ct-climate-change-bill-senate-failure-legislative-session-2024-ev-greenhouse-gas>

It's unfortunate that this question casually lumps together fossil fuels and nuclear energy. Nuclear provides a tremendous amount of reliable clean energy on an extremely small footprint. I'm strongly supportive of renewables, but we have to be realistic about their limitations. Utility scale renewables require a tremendous amount of space, and a huge volume of resources - that will have to be disposed of someday. We treasure our open space in NWCT, and are dealing with a solid waste crisis (MIRA). As mentioned above, I am about 6 miles from Cricket Valley - which is just 1 of 3 gas fired power plants that were built to replace Indian Point. Opponents of Indian Point assured us that capacity was being replaced by renewables, but that isn't the case.

Circling back to the climate legislation, I've seen the very real cost savings of rooftop solar and heat pumps serving as the President of Kent Affordable Housing. In knocking on doors, electric costs are a large burden for most homeowners - except the ones that have solar on their roofs. In advocating for the legislation during the campaign, I'll be focusing on the potential cost savings for households when discussing the issue with voters.

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'd love to take the lead on some of this.

4) Clean Cars and Trucks Emissions Standards:

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

- Unsure

We have an electric car, and we love it. But there are limitations, and we don't yet have the infrastructure and the clean power generation capacity for an EV mandate. Let CA - with its massive population and economy take the lead with their mandate - and work on building out the CT clean energy capacity and infrastructure for the transition.

5) Environmental Rights Amendment:

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

- Unsure

NYS passed such an amendment, and it was almost immediately used to launch lawsuits blocking congestion pricing. Building out clean energy generation and infrastructure is going to have an environmental impact - which such an amendment - if not very carefully written - could delay or stop.

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

Absolutely. Solid waste management is a huge issue in our area. Last year, Kent started a composting program and diverted something like 18 tons from the landfills.

On the edible food front, I am a volunteer at the Kent Food Bank, and see first hand how beneficial programs like Food Rescue are. This is another area where I'd love to take an active, lead role if elected.

7) Neonicotinoids:

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

- Unsure

With the Chevron decision, the state legislature is going to have to take a much more active and aggressive role in regulation. In general, whether it comes to pesticides or antibiotics, we have to avoid indiscriminate overuse. Neonics are extremely powerful, and need to be used extremely carefully.

I would support regulations prohibiting indiscriminate, wide-scale use of neonics, but I would not support a ban for non-agricultural use. We've seen wave after wave of invasive insects impacting tree species, such as the ashes and hemlocks. The Emerald Ash Borer has devastated our forests shockingly fast. Neonics have proven to be extremely effective in saving individual trees, which can be used to re-establish species once effective biocontrols have been found. I serve on the board of an Adirondack environmental advocacy group, and we grappled with the use of neonics in the fight to save the hemlocks in that region, and decided that the benefits of their use to save individual trees outweighed the costs.

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

When I was 7 or 8, I found a Great Horned Owl that was unable to fly. We captured it and brought it to White Memorial in Litchfield, where it died - likely due to rodenticides. For years, I've been encouraging people to avoid using rodenticides due to the collateral damage they cause. (I'm a big fan of the bucket trap.)

9) Environmental Justice:

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

- Unsure

It is unfortunate that so much of our infrastructure was built with utter disregard for their impacts. However, it is what we rely on now, so we have to consider the big picture and the consequences of potentially eliminating that infrastructure.

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

We need to provide strong support for non-lethal ways to reduce bear conflicts. I've dealt with this issue at great length at Kent Affordable Housing. We had some great bear issues due to the standard dumpsters we used, that bears have no problem getting into. We got some reinforced ones - but neither bears nor our tenants could get into them. We finally got receptacles that kept bears out - and our tenants could use - and our bear problems stopped. I'd like to look into requiring the use of bear proof trash receptacles where bears become a problem.

To be clear though, I also think we need to start managing the bear population. In 2022, a child was dragged into the woods by a bear in Morris. We are the only state with a meaningful bear population that does not allow hunting - and we have 3 times as many home entries per 100 bears as other states. See page 11 - https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/deep/wildlife/pdf_files/2024-the-state-of-the-bears.pdf

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 strongly 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
Yes, enthusiastically.

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
I'd like to meet with you a lot more than that, and hopefully before the election as well.