



# Montgomery County Green Democrats



*This questionnaire contains cross references (CRF) to questions presented in the 2018 Conservation Candidate Questionnaire of the Maryland LCV; Sierra Club-Maryland Chapter; and Clean Water Action*

## Questions for State Candidates for Maryland offices (Governor, State Senate, and House of Delegates) from the Montgomery County Green Democrats

### A. Environmental Toxins

#### 1. What is your top priority in reducing impervious surfaces?

My top priority in reducing impervious surfaces would be to focus on promoting green and vegetated roofs for our school buildings across the state. This should be a major element in the new construction formula across our state. Whether solar panels, or vegetated gardens, these types of alternatives to the standard “impervious surface” roofs are not only better for the environment but they are more energy friendly and will save districts money and contribute to a healthier school environment.

#### 2. Do you support

- a. Banning tire waste from playground material? Regardless , what should be done with tire waste?

I fully support banning tire waste from playground material. Tire waste can be used in a variety of other more environmentally safe products like certain types of building materials, road surfaces, or one company in particular that creates cushions with them. We should also be thinking about how to create and promote more eco-friendly tires at the production stage, which would ultimately help alleviate this problem at the end of a tire's life.



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- b. Use of real grass fields rather than synthetic turf? Does your answer depend on whether plant-based infill is required for synthetic turf?

I fully support the use of grass fields – with little to no exceptions. Rather than spending money on turf, we should be investing in the necessary resources so that school districts can be using grass and managing them efficiently. Grass is better for the environment, our children's health, and ultimately cheaper if managed properly.

- c. Health hazard evaluation of toxins and worker protection (CRF-13. See also CRF-19) wherever concerns are raised?

Yes – I support health hazard evaluations for worker protection when concerns are raised. No worker, in any industry, should be subjected to environmental hazards on the job – and if identified – those hazards need to be remediated and removed.

3. Do you support reducing fertilizer and pesticide runoff from manicured lawns, golf courses, and farms? (CRF-6,8,19) If so, what steps do you recommend taking in order to accomplish this goal?

I support reducing runoff so we can protect our local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. According to the EPA, runoff accounts for 15% of the nitrogen pollution in the Bay and is the only source that is increasing. The Bay holds personal significance to me, because growing up in Philadelphia, my family and I would take regular trips to Baltimore, Annapolis, and the Eastern Shore. These trips as a kid are what inspired my love of Maryland. It's of paramount importance that we continue our commitment to restoring the Bay and I would fully support those efforts if I serve in the House of Delegates.

In terms of specific policies, we should fully fund or increase the funding for the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund. This dedicated fund has supported projects like restoration research and development, improved farming and manure practices, and watershed implementation plans. The state should strengthen its manure remediation policies, particularly with large scale factory poultry farms on the Eastern Shore. While we have positive steps in place like the nutrient management plans and a fund to help accelerate



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innovations in animal waste, it's not enough. I would support legislation like the Poultry Litter Management Act or others to hold the poultry industry more accountable.

I would support the efforts in the General Assembly to reinstate the septic system regulations implemented under the O'Malley Administration. I am also supportive of policies and programs that push our counties and municipalities to improve their stormwater management and reduce runoff. I believe we should also be investigating a statewide ban of pesticides which would not be subject to the same type of legal preemption argument – like the one passed last year in Montgomery County.

## B. Air Quality

### 4. Do you support closing the Dickerson coal power plant? (CRF-4)

I support increasing air quality standards in Maryland and retiring the Dickerson power plant. We should also no longer be subsidizing trash burning facilities as “renewable energy,” like the BRESCO plant in Baltimore City as proposed in the “*Forward with 50*” campaign. Our state needs to be focused on clean power generation and manufacturing.

### 5. What means would you support to encourage the use of public transportation? (CRF-17)

Developing reliable alternatives to vehicles powered by internal combustion engines is a critical piece to reducing our state's greenhouse emissions. There are several problems that need to be addressed to encourage greater use of public transportation. The first is that our Metro system has major reliability problems. Metro has been losing riders and is suffering from a significant lack of public confidence. While this is slowly beginning to change after nearly a year's worth of intensive maintenance and upgrades, it still has a long way to go. At the state level, we can change this by working with District of Columbia and Virginia lawmakers to find a source of guaranteed dedicated funding as well as pursuing other governance changes to help Metro to improve. We should also push to have Metro restore its late night service, which would help restore confidence. Additionally, Metro's pricing is an impediment for riders who live further out from the city center – and we should be incentivizing those who travel the farthest to use public transportation. I would like to investigate the benefits and feasibility of offering a personal tax credit for commuting with transit rather than car.



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Another primary issue that affects both the DC the Baltimore region is a lack of interconnection. For certain routes, it's possible to not need a car. For example, you could take a MARC train from Baltimore County to DC or vice versa and then a bus, the Metro, or a bike share directly to your job. However, for people who work at locations somewhat off the beaten path, using public transportation can be difficult or impossible, particularly for the last few miles to work. We need to focus on connecting bus routes and train lines to the hubs where jobs are located. This could mean more central bus routes to job locations or perhaps tax incentives to employers that run shuttles to and from primary hubs of transit. In Montgomery County, I believe we need to do a better job of connecting areas like Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Rockville with Northern Virginia, so that people have an alternate means of getting to places like Arlington, Ballston, and Tyson's Corner for work.

As for bikes and electric vehicles, I believe the answer also comes down to infrastructure. For bikes, we need more protected bike lanes and interconnected trails so people can get from their homes to work safely. In the urban and suburban areas around DC and Baltimore, we should also be investing in additional bike share docks, so people can also use those as reliable options. For electric vehicles, we need to continue to invest in charging station infrastructure. For electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles, I think there is also a need for greater education. Our state offers a wide array of incentives including tax credits, rebates, access to HOV lines, and more for residents who purchase electric vehicles. However, I believe more people would take advantage of those incentives if they knew more about them.

## C. Water Quality and the Chesapeake Bay

### 6. What programs do you propose to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed? (CRF-6,11)

As mentioned earlier, the Bay holds special significance to me personally and we must do everything we can to protect it and its watersheds. Some of these ideas are mentioned in earlier questions but we should continue to fully fund or increase the funding for the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund. The state should strengthen its manure remediation policies,



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particularly with large scale factory poultry farms on the Eastern Shore. I also believe we should be doing more to control pollution from septic tanks – specifically by going back to the regulations put in place in 2012 by Governor O’Malley.

We must also look at ways to stop silt and polluted sediment from being released from the Conowingo Dam. While it is important to address the sediment issues, that should not be the only focus of state government and it should not be done in lieu of other strict pollution controls that will help limit nitrogen and phosphorous run-off into the Bay. We should fully fund Program Open Space and reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides to also improve the health of the Bay.

As I also mentioned earlier, I am supportive of policies and programs that push our counties and municipalities to improve their stormwater management and reduce runoff. These policies must include things like better zoning rules, fewer impermeable surfaces, rain gardens, green infrastructure like vegetated roofs, and more. In addition to the environmental benefits, these policies have helped to create new green jobs for stormwater management experts whose to build, maintain, and manage our state’s runoff control structures. In areas like Baltimore and Prince Georges County, these jobs are helping lift-up those with less economic opportunities.

## D. Solid Waste

### 6. Do you support a 5 cent fee on each plastic bag? (CRF-13,14)

Yes, I support the current policy of a 5 cent fee on plastic bags. I would also be interested in exploring whether a statewide ban on the disposal of yard waste in plastic bags would be helpful. Given the fact that many counties have already done this, it may relatively easy to push this through.

### 8. Do you support a 5 cent deposit on beverage containers?(CRF-13,14)

I am supportive of any effort that promotes recycling. I know this was pushed in the General Assembly in 2013 and 2014 and was unsuccessful. I would support a renewed effort but would want to be sure it does not compete or harm existing recycling programs



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and would want to be sure that any revenue derived from the program would go to environmental remediation.

## E. Carbon Tax

### 9. Do you support a carbon tax? How do you propose to reduce energy use? (CRF-3).

Yes, I would support a variety of different schemes that would put a price or a tax & rebate on carbon pollution beyond what our state already does for power plants. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 27% of U.S. greenhouse emissions come from the transportation sector, which makes them the second leading source of emissions in the nation. In Maryland, they make-up nearly a third of our state's emissions. Another major contributor to greenhouse emissions is meat production – namely poultry and beef. In Maryland I believe we could put additional carbon pricing for both the transportation sector and poultry industry as another way to lower our state's emissions.

For a pricing scheme I believe we should consider partial funding for some of the infrastructure that would get these industries to reduce their carbon emissions. For transportation, we would also have to think creatively about certain sectors and specific sources – like shipping (ie. Container ships, trucking industry, etc...) or air travel, which though not necessarily based in Maryland, certainly contributes to our emissions. I believe a continued regional strategy would likely be the best approach. As for the poultry industry – I think you could use a similar approach as is currently used with power plants, where the industry would have to purchase credits. There are certainly a wide array of options available to the industry to create cleaner facilities including energy efficiency upgrades, use of renewables like solar and biomass, and techniques to improve manure disposal and storage and reduce the release of methane.

As for the carbon tax & refund approach – I'm curious to see how the District of Columbia ultimately moves forward with the proposals they have been working on and would be excited to engage in developing a plan in Maryland. I believe the model used by British Columbia and Canada would be good for our use here as well. Clearly, pollution is not free and we need an approach that makes people aware of the real impact



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and costs while also encouraging our move away from fossil fuels. Any revenue gained from either system should be moved into a fund to promote clean energy and energy efficiency to help reduce our overall energy use.

## F. Food Recovery

### 10. Do you support programs that would incentivize food recovery? (CRF-12)

Yes – I am supportive of programs that would incentivize food recovery. It seems like there are some pretty easy steps we can take at the state level to promote the infrastructure that would be needed to expand these types of programs, like could using Department of Commerce grants and loans to help. A report after the 2016 Maryland Food Recovery Summit also recommended working with the Maryland State Department of Education to create a food recovery curriculum and identifying and recognizing “food recovery champions” in our public schools. I also think we should be doing more to promote the Maryland Food Recovery Network among our colleges and universities. Perhaps any school that receives state aid should be required to implement a food recovery program? These programs not only help the environment but also help people in need.

## G. Candidate History

### 11. If an incumbent, what specific programs with substantial environmental consequences have you voted for or against? If not an incumbent, what such programs have you publicly favored or disfavored? (e.g. votes for and against pertinent legislation, participation in environmental conferences or litigation, etc.)

I am not an incumbent but some of the policies that I would favor are first and foremost a dedicated source of funding for Metro and a vast increase in resources for public transit of all types. I also support Maryland’s push for either 50% renewable energy standard or 100% renewable energy, if it’s feasible. I’m glad to see the state fully participate in the regional greenhouse gas initiative and stand up to the President’s ill-advised policies with





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regards to the Paris Climate Agreement. I appreciate Delegate Korman's leadership on fossil fuel divestment and would be a proponent of that legislation as well. I support open space preservation and would agree to lock-box funding for Program Open Space while also pushing to strengthen forest conservation. I'm glad the state banned fracking and would be strongly opposed to ever revisiting that decision. I am very supportive of Senator Kagan's push to ban Styrofoam and would love to see our state go even further, perhaps banning the use of certain types of plastics. I also support Senator Madaleno's push to clean up the poultry industry and hold them more accountable for environmental degradation in the Bay. *(Other issues that may not have been mentioned are likely addressed in other questions throughout this questionnaire.)*

Candidates please email your response to [greendemocrats@gmail.com](mailto:greendemocrats@gmail.com) by February 15, 2018