

Sean O'Brien

Response Provided: 02/24

Instructions: The length of responses can range anywhere from a few sentences to two paragraphs. If you have any questions or need an extension, email mark.putman@350wisconsin.org

What does climate success look like to you?

To me, climate success means meeting our city's existing commitments to sustainability while also adapting and making our goals increasingly ambitious. As a young person, addressing the climate crisis is a top priority for me. Our future on this planet – and the future of every generation that comes after us – is at stake. If elected, I will work to keep Madison on track to meet our net zero carbon goal and 100% renewable energy target for the city government by 2030. I will continue to invest in solar and other renewable energy sources and expand the city fleet to be completely electric, including our buses and emergency vehicles.

Investments like these will help protect our natural resources, keep our parks safe and beautiful, and safeguard our waters from toxic forever chemicals like PFAS. They will also create opportunities for good-paying jobs and training in the trades. I believe that climate and a strong economy go hand-in-hand, and our city should take advantage of the opportunities before us by tackling the climate crisis head on.

Given our current socio-political environment, how do you plan to achieve your vision of climate success?

I believe this comes down to creativity, collaboration, and building bridges to get things done. I'm eager to work with other alders who share my commitment to making our city more sustainable and doing everything in our power to reduce Madison's carbon footprint. I also look forward to engaging environmental activists, community leaders, and organizations that are already immersed in the climate justice movement to ensure their voices are heard and our city leadership is held accountable.

In the face of an increasingly hostile federal government, it is now more important than ever that Madison continues to lead the way on climate action and be a national model for emissions reduction. Although we will see limited federal support for new climate programs, we must aggressively pursue other funding avenues – whether that be through the state, the private sector, or even international opportunities.

What projects in your community would you prioritize for climate and environmental justice?

If elected, my priorities will include making continued investments in clean energy, expanding electric vehicles, and finding new ways to make our city's current operations more sustainable, efficient, and lower-impact. I am also committed to keeping our waterways and wells free from harmful forever chemicals like PFAS, ensuring that all residents of our city have consistent access to clean drinking water. Continued investments in climate resilience initiatives will also alleviate the health risks associated with air pollution and gas-powered vehicles. I believe that access to green spaces is a human right and should be treated as a public health issue. If elected, I will be a champion for our public parks and work to keep them safe, beautiful, and accessible for generations to come.

Above all, our city needs to address the root causes of public health inequities and systems of violence. It is no secret that the most underserved and marginalized communities face a disproportionate impact from the climate crisis. As an alder, I will bring attention to these disparities and always view policy through a lens of environmental and racial justice. The investments that our city makes in renewable energy, clean air and water, and infrastructure has the potential to uplift all residents, improve public health, and make Madison more resilient to the impacts of climate change in the near and distant future.

What actions around climate justice has your community already taken that you're proud of?

I've been encouraged by Madison's efforts to reduce our carbon footprint and bring attention to the climate crisis. I was excited to see the city's grant program for youth climate action, as well as how Madison has used funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and other federal legislation to invest in clean energy projects, build new infrastructure, and electrify our city's buses through BRT. It is also incredible that Madison is home to the first all-electric fire truck in North America.

But we must do more and deepen our commitment to a just, rapid transition away from carbon-based energy. I'm committed to investing in programs that work, building on the progress we've made, and exploring new initiatives to address climate change quickly and equitably.

Kim Richman

Response Pending. Deadline is February 28th. Check Back Later

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