

The Maryland League of Conservation Voters

General

1. Please describe which environmental issues are most important to you and why. If elected, what specific environmental issues would you seek to address during your 2019-2022 term in the General Assembly?

Lead paint in housing and schools remains a scourge that poisons thousands of children in Maryland. Reducing and remediating the harm caused by lead paint is one of my priorities because of its crippling life-long effects on children. I was honored this past session to sponsor and defend the legislation giving the Attorney General the authority to sue to protect Marylanders from harmful federal policy, including misguided and illegal actions by the EPA. I reached out to the environmental community to ensure an environmentally conscious redevelopment of Pimlico race track.

Climate Change

Climate change poses an existential threat to our environment, public health, and the economy. Maryland's coastal communities, for example, are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise (which degrades roads and ruins cropland), while urban and suburban communities, for example, are experiencing increased summer heat and associated smog elevation. With federal action on climate change stalled, Maryland must continue to be proactive in reducing its greenhouse gas pollution and also must take measures to seek to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

2. The Clean Energy Jobs Act, enacted in 2017 after a veto override, amended Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to set a renewable energy target of 25% by 2020, but does not provide for further progress after 2020. Do you support strengthening the RPS to reach 50% renewable energy by 2030, including a phase-out of waste incineration as a qualifying source under the RPS, and significant investment in clean-energy job-training?

I support strengthening the Renewable Portfolio Standard. I would be particularly interested in investing in clean-energy job training because this would create 21st Century jobs for Marylanders, many of whom have lost good paying jobs in the new economy.

3. There is broad agreement that pricing carbon is an effective strategy to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Maryland participates in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative which prices carbon pollution from power plants and generates revenue which is returned to us and the other participating states. Would you support pricing carbon pollution from sectors other than power plants, such as the transportation sector, and using the revenue collected (at least in part) to promote clean energy alternatives (such as in the transportation sector) and help communities impacted by climate change? If yes, briefly explain the guidelines you believe should be used in developing such legislation.

I support placing a price on carbon pollution generally and using any funds generated to promote clean energy alternatives and assist communities affected by climate change. In particular, the principles of environmental justice should guide policy makers in developing such legislation because the impact of climate change and pollution has fallen disproportionately on communities of color.

4. Maryland still obtains electricity from seven coal plants in the state, four of which are over 50 years old. These plants emit greenhouse gases, and release toxic pollutants into the air and water. Several lack modern controls for air pollutants like nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide, and lack up-to-date clean water permits. Would you support legislation to end the use of coal to generate electricity in Maryland, which also would provide for electricity reliability through clean energy and energy conservation, and provide protection (e.g., retraining) for coal plant workers?

I would support legislation to end the use of coal for electricity generation in Maryland. It is important that if such legislation would result in job losses, it should also provide job retraining and other protections for affected workers.

5. What measures should Maryland take to increase support for vulnerable communities affected by climate change? This could include, for example, measures to address sea level rise in coastal communities, and measures to address health impacts in urban communities.

The smart growth policies pioneered in Maryland can be a vehicle to support vulnerable communities affected by climate change. Strengthening the mandate to plan for climate change at the state level would keep Maryland on the innovative edge and provide across the board assistance to urban and coastal communities. In order to ensure that the State adheres to equitable principles, full transparency with the public at all stages of the planning process should be the norm. Now that technology has enabled large

amounts of data to be published cheaply on the Internet, transparency requires that not just final products but working materials as well be easily accessible to the public.

Chesapeake Bay

The multi-state, bipartisan partnership to restore the Bay is improving the health of the Bay, benefiting our environment and our economy. For example, adult crabs have tripled since 2014, oyster harvests have reached a 30-year high, and underwater grasses have been observed at record numbers. Still, we will not meet our 2025 clean-up goals. The agricultural sector is the largest source of pollution in the Bay and local waterways, and urban and suburban stormwater sources and rural septic systems also are pollution sources.

6. Is cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay a matter of importance for your district's residents? What current policies and programs to clean up the Bay should be continued or enhanced, and should any be changed or dropped?

The Bay is an economic, natural, and recreational resource of the highest importance to all Maryland citizens. We need to build upon all programs that clean up the Bay. While I don't have specifics to offer, my voting record shows that I have always supported Bay cleanup efforts.

7. Please identify two policies or programs you support that address Bay pollution by reducing agricultural pollution, mitigating pollution from new development, reducing use of and pollution from septic systems, and/or improving stormwater management.

In 2015, I was the primary sponsor of legislation to allow the Cigarette Restitution Fund to be used to provide financial assistance to farmers for implementation of state or local watershed implementation plans associated with the Chesapeake Bay total maximum daily load limits.

In 2016, I co-sponsored the Poultry Litter Management Act which sought to reduce the amount of poultry litter leaching into the Chesapeake Bay.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a major economic driver in Maryland, but also has significant environmental impacts. Large chicken houses are expanding on the Eastern Shore

when Maryland is trying to manage the amount of manure spread on farm fields to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus runoff (that harms the Bay). Increasing sustainable farming practices (organic farming, cover crops, crop rotation, etc.) could significantly improve the health of communities and the Bay.

8. As some farmers have moved forward with sustainable and beneficial environmental farming practices, what programs do you support to help conventional farmers transition to more sustainable practices?

As part of the cigarette restitution fund programs, we have successfully transitioned farmers from tobacco to other farming products. These transition programs could serve as a model, where appropriate, for a similar transition from conventional to sustainable farming products and practices.

9. Do you support or oppose an expansion of large, industrial size poultry farms on the Eastern Shore? What additional legislation or regulations are needed to protect air and water quality in the communities and waterways affected by these farms?

If there is to be any expansion of poultry farming on the Eastern Shore, it needs to be done within the context of existing or enhanced regulations. In either case, enforcement will be the key to long-term protection of air and water quality on the Eastern Shore.

Water

Pollution from septic systems drains into our ground and surface water, leading to environmental degradation and dirty drinking water from excess nitrogen and bacteria. Conventional septic systems do not prevent nitrogen from entering groundwater. Currently, septic systems and wells are only inspected at the point of a home sale, allowing systems to fail and/or pollute drinking water for years.

10. How should Maryland address concerns relating to failing or inadequate septic systems, and protect our drinking water sources and freshwater streams and rivers from septic-system pollution?

Enhanced regulations to proscribe replacement of faulty septic systems and regular inspections of these residential septic systems would provide greater protection for drinking water. In addition to pollution from septic systems, Maryland should seek to

eliminate lead contamination in drinking water in our urban areas. We need to ensure that what happened in Flint and elsewhere does not happen here.

Environmental Justice

Environmental pollution is one of several factors resulting in health disparities across Maryland, particularly pollution from natural gas infrastructure, coal-fired power plants, and concentrated animal feed operations which often are centered or clustered in and around specific communities. Current permitting practices only take into consideration the pollution coming from each source independent of the total amount of pollution emitted in and around an affected community. Food deserts is another important environmental justice in Maryland.

11. Would you support legislation requiring the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to consider cumulative sources of pollution when issuing permits? In the absence of proposed legislation, how would you work to push MDE to follow that practice?

I would support legislation requiring MDE to consider cumulative sources of pollution when issuing permits. In the absence of legislation, the budget process can be used to require MDE to study the practice and possible steps towards implementation of such a policy.

12. What programs would you support to enhance current efforts to increase access to fresh food for lower income communities?

I'm fully aware of the importance of eliminating food deserts. In my own district, I advocated for the opening of a new Shop Rite in Howard Park.

Trash and Waste Pollution

More than two-thirds of trash placed in our waste system is recyclable, and the overall amount of trash could be limited through better practices and policy. For example, over four billion beverages in single-use containers are sold in Maryland every year, but only about one-fourth are recycled, and plastic beverage containers make up about half of the trash collected from Maryland waterways during community clean-ups. Styrofoam products are one of the most pervasive products littering our landscapes and waterways, and remains in the environment almost indefinitely. A significant portion of

Maryland's trash is sent to trash incinerators – Dickerson in Montgomery County and BRESCO in Baltimore City – which emit greenhouse gases and toxic pollutants.

13. What programs should Maryland implement to support waste reduction, and encourage recycling, waste diversion, composting, etc.?

I would support efforts that build upon existing programs in Maryland and elsewhere that have reduced waste and encouraged recycling, waste diversion and composting.

14. MDE is currently reviewing air pollution standards for the two incinerators. Do you support reducing our reliance on trash incineration while increasing the air quality standards for these plants?

I support reducing the reliance on trash incineration. In general, trash incinerators are located near lower income and minority-majority neighborhoods; eliminating their use would be a significant environmental justice victory.

Forests and Land Use

Forests play a critical role in providing wildlife habitat, holding soil, and filtering pollution out of water. Their health and quantity is critical for healthy, clean streams and rivers in Maryland. Despite state goals for “no net loss,” the current Forest Conservation Act generally requires planting only a quarter acre of new trees for every acre of trees cleared for development. As a result, Maryland's forest acreage is declining.

15. Should the Forest Conservation Act be amended stop or reverse this trend of forest loss?

The FCA should be amended to stop and reverse the trend of forest loss.

Open Space

Program Open Space uses funding from the transfer tax to protect the best of Maryland's open spaces. Despite broad public support, the program funds have often been raided to support other budget priorities. Thanks to legislation passed in 2016, FY 2019 will be the first time these programs are to be returned to full cash funding in over

a decade; however, the funding for the program will remain vulnerable as long as it is not placed in a designated lock-box.

16. Would you support legislation to protect full funding (lock-box status) of this program?

We should continue the policy of maintaining POS funds at full cash funding.

Transportation

Transportation reforms are increasingly recognized as a key to reducing climate pollution and cleaning up our air and water. Maryland's transportation system is a mix of state and local systems working independently of each other, and is responsible for over one-third of our state's greenhouse gases and a significant percentage of our air pollution.

17. What are the biggest impediments to increasing the number of people who use alternatives to personal vehicles powered by the internal combustion engine – including electric vehicles, public transportation, bicycles, and walking – and what should Maryland do to address these impediments?

Governor Hogan's cancellation of the Red Line project is the biggest impediment in recent years to increasing the number of people using an alternative to personal vehicles powered by an internal combustion engine. I would urge the next Governor to restart the project immediately.

18. In 2016, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Maryland Open Transportation Investment Decision Act to require the Department of Transportation to score and rank potential projects. Do you support this program and commit to holding the Maryland Department of Transportation accountable for implementation?

I voted for the 2016 Act and I would support any effort to hold MDoT accountable for its implementation.

Toxics

Overuse of pesticides carries significant risk to the environment and public health, but there is currently no statewide program to monitor use.

19. Do you support mandating a central pesticide database (for data currently required to be kept by farmers and commercial applicators) so that regulators can have access to data for monitoring pesticide impacts? Please identify any other new programs you support to monitor and regulate pesticide use.

Yes, I support a mandated central pesticide database and any new programs that would seek to increase enforcement of current or enhanced regulations of pesticide use.

Elections and Good Government

Strong environmental legislation relies on the ability of all citizens to participate in open and fair elections, to put into office public officials who ably represent the most vulnerable populations, and a legislature that reflects the diverse communities across Maryland.

20. Will you vote for a new process for drawing district lines, such as non-partisan or independent commission that will take the politics out of redistricting?

I will vote for a new process consistent with the holding in Gill v. Whitford, which will be decided next year by the Supreme Court. There is an anti-environment majority in the House of Representatives because of the gerrymandered districts in states controlled by Republican legislatures. We need a constitutionally sound redistricting process in every state.

21. Would you support overhauling the existing Fair Campaign Finance Fund and replacing it with a modern public financing program available to all state candidates (legislative and state-wide), funded by a mix of dedicated funds and general fund support?

I would support such legislation. Decisions in Annapolis should benefit our constituents, not a handful of moneyed interests.

Environmental Enforcement and Accountability

The budgets for environmental agencies in Maryland have consistently been slashed, severely undermining the ability of these agencies to enforce the law. At the same time, restrictive “standing” rules (more restrictive than in federal court) can bar individuals and organizations from having the opportunity to remedy violations in state court (the most recent example being a 4 to 3 decision by the Maryland Court of Appeals in 2015 limiting standing to challenge amendments to county comprehensive plans).

22. Do you support restoring agency enforcement budgets to ensure compliance with environmental laws and regulations?

Yes. I have worked over the years to increase the amount of money available for enforcement of Maryland’s environmental laws and regulations.

23. Would you support legislation to expand “standing” rules in Maryland courts (for example, to provide that they are at least as expansive as in federal court)?

Yes. Citizen suits are a vital tool to ensure compliance with environmental regulations in the absence of comprehensive enforcement.