



Statewide Questions for Legislative Candidates

1. Environmental Entrepreneurs, commonly known as E2, stated in a 2018 report that Pennsylvania has over 86,000 clean energy jobs. The US Department of Energy, in its 2017 Energy and Employment report, estimates that one out of every 50 new jobs of any kind added nationally is a solar energy job. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, solar installers are forecast to be the fastest growing occupation in the U.S. between 2016 and 2026.

In your view, should Pennsylvania move aggressively to take greater advantage of job growth in the clean energy sector? If so, what policies and job training strategies would you promote in the General Assembly.

2. A 2014 report by the Pennsylvania Department of Health found that children in 18 cities across Pennsylvania tested positive for lead at higher levels than children in Flint, Michigan. These 18 cities include Allentown, Altoona, Bethlehem, Erie, Harrisburg, Johnstown, Philadelphia, Reading and Scranton. The damaging neurological effects of lead exposure, particularly among children, have been well-documented in the medical literature.

How should the General Assembly help tackle the challenge of identifying and replacing water service lines and well pumps containing lead across the Commonwealth? How should this plan be funded?

3. The Environmental Stewardship Fund, commonly known as the Growing Greener program, has been very popular with both the public and members of the General Assembly on both sides of the aisle. Since the program's inception under Governor Ridge, Growing Greener funds have been used to repair and improve over 130 projects in State Parks and State Forests, preserve 78,000 acres of productive farmland, conserve 80,000 acres of natural areas, plug over 1,000 abandoned oil and gas wells, restore 1,600 acres of abandoned mine lands and 250 acres of

brownfields, improve over 370 community parks, and complete over 400 water pollution and flooding control projects.

Today, funding for Growing Greener has been substantially reduced. Do you support a significant new influx of funding for Growing Greener? If so, where should this funding come from?

4. The Environmental Defense Fund in February released a report concluding that Pennsylvania oil and gas operators release more than 520,000 tons of methane per year. Methane is the primary component of natural gas and a powerful pollutant contributing to climate change. These emissions, which primarily come from leaky, outdated and malfunctioning machinery, pipelines and other infrastructure, are the equivalent to the climate pollution from 11 coal-fired power plants and results in \$68 million in wasted product for the oil and gas industry. The Environmental Defense Fund estimates that 60 percent of the emissions could be captured using strategies required in other oil and gas-producing states.

Please discuss your thoughts on how Pennsylvania state government should address the issue of methane leakage and pollution from oil and gas operations.

5. David Hess, former Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, or DEP, under Republican Governors Ridge and Schweiker, has written that that DEP has had its budget cut 40 percent over the 13 years ending in fiscal year 2016, and has lost 22 percent of its staff over the past 15 years. These massive cuts have left the environmental community questioning the ability of DEP to fulfill its mission to protect citizens and the environment, and the business community questioning the speed at which permits are processed.

Will you commit to working through the appropriations process to help DEP rebuild its budget and staff complement so the agency can more effectively discharge its duties?

6. On January 29, 2015, Governor Wolf signed an executive order prohibiting further leasing of Pennsylvania State Park and State Forest land for oil or gas drilling.

Do you support maintaining the moratorium on further leasing if you are elected in November?

7. With the development of the Marcellus shale in Pennsylvania, thousands of miles of pipelines are being constructed across the Commonwealth to get the gas to market, be it in here, in other states or overseas. The construction of these pipelines across the state has been controversial and met with considerable local opposition. Citizens have objected to 1) the use of eminent domain to site pipelines across private property; 2) locating pipelines and other oil and gas infrastructure in close proximity to homes and schools; and 3) the overall risks of pipelines to public safety and the environment, particularly air and water quality.

How should the General Assembly protect the public and the environment from pipeline projects and the damage they cause?

8. Buildings account for approximately 41 percent of the energy use in the U.S., 73 percent of electricity consumption, 40 percent of carbon emissions, and 14 percent of water consumption. Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Virginia and other states require high-performance or green building standards for state building projects. These high-performance building standards have been shown to yield considerable long-term savings for the taxpayer; reductions in pollution, energy and water use; and a healthier and more productive work environment for employees.

What is your position on legislation that would require such high-performance building standards involving projects owned or significantly leased by Pennsylvania state government?

9. In 2004, the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act. This law requires that by 2021, eight percent of the state's electricity must come from clean energy sources like wind and solar, and 0.5 percent must come from solar specifically.

While this law has been widely credited with boosting the development of affordable, clean energy in Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth has fallen far behind the renewable energy requirements of neighboring states. For example, Delaware requires 25 percent renewable energy by 2025, New Jersey requires 35 percent renewable energy by 2035, and New York requires 50 percent renewable energy by 2050.

With the Pennsylvania law expiring in 2021, should the state significantly ramp up its requirements for clean energy generally, and solar energy specifically?

- 10.** Pennsylvanians love their State Parks, with annual visitation now over 40 million. Our State Parks present wonderful opportunities for outdoor recreation, family picnics and camping, environmental education and wildlife watching. The State Parks are also engines for local economies. A 2012 Penn State study found that for every dollar the Commonwealth invests in the parks, \$12.41 of income is provided to Pennsylvania.

However, decreased funding for State Parks over time has resulted in a backlog of over \$500 million in State Park infrastructure needs according to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. This backlog includes roads, bridges, dams, overnight facilities, water and sewer infrastructure, visitor's centers, restrooms, trails, playgrounds and much more.

Are you willing to commit to supporting long-term plan to reinvest in our State Parks and address the significant backlog of infrastructure projects?

- 11.** The EPA defines "environmental justice" as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."

The concern with environmental justice is that these vulnerable communities are all-too-often subject to a disproportionate burden of pollution and contamination by their proximity to sources of pollution and their limited ability to move.

What can Pennsylvania state government do to improve the environmental conditions faced by Pennsylvania's vulnerable populations, who are located across the state?

- 12.** There have been a number of recent attempts to try to balance the Pennsylvania state budget by raiding or diverting money from dedicated environmental funds such as the Environment Stewardship Fund, commonly known as Growing Greener, or the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund.

What is your position on these diversions? Would you support or oppose an amendment that diverts this funding? Would you support or oppose a budget bill that relies on these diversions?

- 13.** Pennsylvania's Act 129 is the Commonwealth's flagship energy efficiency law. It requires the state's seven major electric utilities to reduce energy demand in their respective service territories. By any measure, Act 129 has been an unqualified success, delivering \$6.4 billion in benefits to Pennsylvania electric customers, reducing pollution and creating jobs in the energy efficiency sector.

Do you support extending Pennsylvania's Act 129 energy efficiency law to natural gas utilities? Why or why not?

- 14.** Please describe your top three environmental priorities for the next session of the General Assembly? How will these policies improve Pennsylvania's environment? How will they benefit the citizens of your district?

- 15.** The use of Green infrastructure is a cost-effective approach to reducing storm water and water pollution, especially in urban areas. Green infrastructure is designed to mimic nature and capture rainfall at its source by using vegetation, soils and other elements and techniques. Philadelphia and Lancaster have become national leaders in the use of green infrastructure.

How can the General Assembly promote the use of green infrastructure to address the Commonwealth's serious flooding and water pollution problems?

- 16.** Nearly all climate scientists would argue that Pennsylvania is already experiencing numerous negative impacts caused or exacerbated by climate change. These include heavier rains and flooding, a significant increase in the incidence and spread of Lyme disease, droughts and pests that harm our agricultural sector, and hotter days that threaten vulnerable populations and worsen air quality.

Do you plan to make addressing climate change a higher priority in your next term? Why or why not? What specific policies do you plan to pursue?

- 17.** Let's say some friends of yours own a farm in your district. This past weekend you saw them at a diner during breakfast. They were concerned and somewhat agitated. Recently they learned that their preserved farm was in the path of a natural gas pipeline, and that the pipeline company would begin eminent domain proceedings if they did not reach an agreement regarding access and compensation.

What would you tell your friends? How would you explain your position on pipelines if a town hall was held in their community?

- 18.** Agriculture is widely discussed as Pennsylvania's leading industry. But some of the counties with our most productive farmland, such as Lancaster, York, Berks and Lehigh counties, are those seeing the highest development pressures. Pennsylvania's farmland preservation program, funded by a portion of both the Growing Greener program and the cigarette tax, is a national leader, but hundreds of family farms remain on a waiting list due to lack of funds.

How would you work to protect the farms and the land that sustains our agricultural industry?

- 19.** Article I, Section 27, of the Pennsylvania Constitution states that, *The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.*

Being a trustee for the environment and Pennsylvania's extraordinary public resources, now and for future generations, is a weighty responsibility. How will you live up to these responsibilities over your coming term in the General Assembly?