

2014 Candidate Survey



CONNECTICUT LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS

- BEFORE YOU COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE SAVE IT TO YOUR COMPUTER AND USE THAT FILE TO RETURN TO US.
- Please complete this survey by August 1, 2014.
- Email your completed survey to: ctlcvt@ctlcvt.org

Candidate Name: Tara Cook-Littman

Running for: **XX House** District No: **134** Party **Democratic**

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Are you enrolled in the Citizen's Election Fund for public campaign financing? **Yes**
 Do you have a primary? **No**
 Are you an incumbent? **No**

Part 1: If elected, what position do you expect to take on the following environmental issues?
 Please mark boxes named "Support," "Uncertain," and "Oppose" with an x.

Topic	Question	Support	Uncertain	Oppose
Parks	Would you support state park and forest revenues going to park and forest operations and maintenance rather than to the General Fund?	X		
Comments:				
Transportation	CT is one of the 10 states most dependent on federal funds as a percentage of their transportation expenditures. More than half of the states and localities have moved forward on increasing their funding share. Do you favor this and how might we do it in CT?	X		

Comments: Connecticut's roads are ranked among the worst in the nation and Metro North has become unreliable and dangerous. We need to look at our transportation infrastructure and make good, long term decisions to increase the use of mass transit, keep our roads and highways safe and allow for pedestrian and bike friendly transit options. This has to be a priority for us. We need to simply make the commitment to invest capital resources for these types of projects.			
Property Tax Reform	CT's property tax burdens small towns, strangles cities, undermines mass transit and drives sprawl. Would you be an advocate on behalf of the environment in the tax reform debate, especially with regards to property tax?	x	
Comments:			

Topic	Question	Support	Uncertain	Oppose
Pesticides	The American Academy of Pediatrics and many other science and medical institutions have warned that pesticides (including herbicides) are harmful to human and ecological health. CT has a ban on use of lawn care pesticides on grounds of elementary and middle schools. Would you support legislation to extend this ban to high schools and public parks where children play?	x		
Comments: I am proud to say, as the outgoing chair of ConnFACT, that I, along with my colleagues, have been a leader in this debate. We continue to play a major role on this issue in the Connecticut legislature. I am fully supportive and would hope to be viewed as a leader on this issue should I be elected.				
Pesticides	Should towns have more authority to limit or guide pesticide applications within their borders, including roadside spraying and applications of pesticides in wetlands and surface water?	x		
Comments:				
Water Source Protection	CT normally uses decades old data for setting standards and guidance for stormwater management. Would you support requiring the state to upgrade its standards using scientifically validated, up-to-date statistics on volumes of water associated with extreme storms and annual precipitation?	x		
Comments:				
Microbeads	Many personal care products such as shampoos and toothpaste are being manufactured using tiny plastic microbeads. Once microbeads are washed down the drain, they can enter lakes, rivers, and eventually the ocean through sewage overflows or pass through sewage treatment plants. Microbeads, like other plastics, can absorb toxic chemicals. They can be mistaken for food by aquatic life and can be passed up the food chain to larger fish, wildlife, and humans. Would you support legislation to protect our waterways from this new environmental threat?	x		
Comments: I was unaware of this issue, but I am fully supportive and will even encourage ConnFACT to work on this issue as well. The introduction of potentially hazardous products or substances into consumer goods without our knowledge has to stop. I believe that informed consumers can put real pressure on companies to make the right decisions, but we have to know in order to take these steps.				
Conservation Lands	Would you support passing a state Constitutional Amendment to better protect state conservation lands from being given away for non-conservation purposes?	x		
Comments:				

Energy	Would you support policies or legislation to protect and expand the state's cost-effective energy efficiency programs opposing any attempts to raid the CT Energy Efficiency Fund for state budgetary needs?	X		
Comments:				
Energy	While other states promote shared net metering and sub metering for solar, fuel cell and other distributed renewable sources, CT imposes regulatory barriers that effectively prevent development of these projects in our state. Would you support legislation that removes these barriers and enable clean renewable distributed generation to move forward?	X		
Comments:				
Toxins	Would you support legislation that requires the Department of Public Health to identify chemicals of high concern to children, manufacturer disclosure of those chemicals and a process for recommendations to reduce exposure?	X		
Comments: It is a travesty that this bill has not passed in the last two years. This is the minimum we should be doing so that parents have the information they need to make informed decisions to protect their children from toxic chemicals. However, it is my belief that once a chemical is scientifically proven or even suspected of being a threat to the health of children whose bodies are still developing, those products should be banned from being used in children's products.				



Part 2: What environmental issue has lacked the attention in Connecticut that it deserves? As a legislator, what will you do to change that?

The fight I was involved with, to label GMO products, certainly had more than its share of attention in the past two sessions. We were able to generate significant attention by educating the public, maximizing social media and recruiting a core of committed people to lead the effort. If elected, I am excited to be able to use the skills I gained as an attorney and an activist to make a difference on the issues we care about in Hartford.

It is hard to imagine why, in the past two years, the issue of "chemicals of concern" has not risen to the level of a bill that must be done. Protecting kids from these hazards starts with having the information necessary to make informed decisions. I believe we can raise the profile of this issue and finish the job. I look forward to being involved in this.

I am also committed to continue educating people about the dangers of pesticide use to our health and environment. There is no question these chemicals are having a negative impact on our environment (i.e. harming wildlife, polluting our water, our soil, and air) and harming our health (there have been countless scientific studies connecting pesticides with diseases such as cancer). The chemical lobby is on high alert in Hartford because of the current ban on pesticides in K-8 school grounds and the GMO labeling law. There is a great deal of propaganda being put forth by this industry and we must continue to raise the level of knowledge by our legislators in Hartford to combat this. We also must work with our local municipalities to show them the way to caring for their land, their fields, playgrounds and schools without pesticides. We should pursue funding by way of grants to support municipalities who choose not to use pesticides.

Part 3: What are the environmental priorities in your district?

Transportation, both highway issues and the troubles with Metro North, are critical to the health of both Trumbull and Fairfield. Metro North's failures have pushed more cars onto our roads, creating pollution and impacting the desirability of these communities. Pedestrian and Bicycle friendly options also are gaining momentum locally.

Property Tax reform is a key issue in both towns in the District and it has a direct impact on the environment. The lack of such reform encourages sprawl and other environmental challenges. Locally, the impact on education is also significant and both these factors will be important to my decision-making on this issue.

Long Island Sound, while not directly in my District, is enjoyed by residents of both towns and impacted by many of the actions we take locally. I grew up fishing and boating on the Sound with my family. I will fight to preserve and protect the Sound so that it remains a viable fishery and a place for people to relax and enjoy this treasure.

**Part 4: If you are elected, what would be your top environmental priorities for the 2014 legislative session?
Please identify up to three and rank the three in order 1, 2, or 3:**

1. Transportation
2. Property Tax Reform
3. Pesticides

Comments: