

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: ctlcv@ctlcv.org

Candidate Name: Mary Mushinsky

Running for: House Senate District No: 85 Party: Democratic

Candidate/Campaign Mailing Address: 188 South Cherry St./Wallingford, CT 06492

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Are you enrolled in the Citizen's Election Fund for public campaign financing? Yes No

Do you have a primary? Yes No

Are you an incumbent? Yes 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: As co-chair of Program Review and Investigations Cmte, I led the fight for strengthening the state park and forest revenue stream and allowing the system to raise some of their own funds.				
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		

<p>Comments: The federal highway funding system is temporary, as Congress has been unable to decide on a gas tax increase or other revenue stream. In view of this paralysis, it makes sense for the state to look at raising some of its own road money using electronic tolls.</p>			
<p>Property Tax Reform</p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>x</p>	
<p>Comments: I have consistently supported easing the property tax burden in the Finance Committee. Municipal pursuit of development for property tax revenues encourages wasteful growth on sites far removed from infrastructure.</p>			

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		
<p>Comments: I have supported this expansion in prior sessions. Public parks in particular should be pesticide free due to their use by all ages of children.</p>				
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		
<p>Comments:</p>				
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		
<p>Comments: Historical data is not accurate for predicting future CT volume and precipitation events, according to analysts who have already observed changes due to global warming.</p>				
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		
<p>Comments: I will need more information on this new threat and the products that contain microbeads.</p>				
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		
<p>Comments: A state constitutional amendment should be the last resort.</p>				

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: The best way to keep the fund from raids is to steadily invest the funds in energy efficiency programs. If funds are not being spent, it will be very tempting for the governor and legislature to raid them if there is a budget shortfall in 2015.				
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: Germany is now up to 50% solar, and located at similar latitude. CT can achieve that rate if supported by state policy.				
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: The DPH should coordinate this effort with UConn, which also hosts a chemicals of concern office and has a similar responsibility.				



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

A statewide water planning effort was unfunded for decades until we passed a water planning bill in 2014. Now some funds exist at Office of Policy and Management to begin the process. My priority will be to fully fund the water planning process so the state can meet the January 2018 deadline for submitting the state water plan to the legislature.

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

1. Extension of the pedestrian/bike Quinnipiac River Linear Trail (trail funding);
2. Energy efficiency for homes and businesses

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:

___ Parks

- 2 Transportation (transportation alternatives)
- Pesticides
- 1 Water Source Protection (statewide water planning)
- Microbeads
- Conservation Lands
- 3 Energy (efficiency and alternate energy)
- Toxins
- Property Tax Reform
- Other (please explain)

Comments:

I will also work on expanding parks' authority to raise their own funds, per the Program Review and Investigations report.