



## **#VOTECLIMATEJUSTICE**

### **2022 Candidate Climate Justice Questions**

*In practice, we can't usually ask candidates this many questions. Just pick whichever ones you like and adapt as needed.*

*Find out the format of an event beforehand in order to be adequately and responsibly prepared. Sometimes there are no questions from the audience; they come from the moderator alone. Sometimes they may take questions in the chat (for virtual events), or sent in, or handed in (for in person events). Rarely will you get to ask a question without some sort of registration process.*

#### **CORE QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES**

1) The [Maine Climate Council](#) has proposed achieving state *carbon neutrality* by 2045. It also supports reducing Maine's greenhouse gas emissions 45% below 1990 levels by 2030 and reducing them 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Do you agree with these goals? Do you agree with this timeline or feel it is too soon or too late? If you agree that carbon neutrality and greenhouse gas emissions reductions are important, how do you plan to ensure these goals are met?

*Carbon neutrality: The balancing of emissions of carbon dioxide with its removal or by eliminating such emissions from society.*

2) Tribal sovereignty legislation failed last legislative session despite historic and overwhelming public support. If you support tribal sovereignty, how will you make sure this does not happen again? If you do not support tribal sovereignty, what are your hesitations?

3) A citizens' initiative to replace Maine's investor-owned utilities with a statewide consumer-owned utility will likely be on the ballot next year. Do you support this initiative? If so, how would you explain your support to someone who is on the fence? If not, what are your hesitations?

4) Offshore wind is likely coming to the Gulf of Maine within the next decade or earlier. Do you support floating offshore wind in federal waters off Maine's coast? If so, how would you build public support for these projects? If not, what are your hesitations around these projects? Regardless, how will you make sure all stakeholder voices are heard throughout the offshore wind decision-making process? Do you think anyone is being left out of the discussion?

5) Please explain how you understand climate change being connected to other issues. How would you address the unique climate justice challenges we face in Maine?

***But if you're hosting a Candidate Forum here are some further questions to consider...***

## **ENERGY JUSTICE**

1. How will you ensure the benefits from the installation, maintenance, and economic gains from climate solutions are equitably distributed?
2. What are your plans to rapidly decarbonize Maine's economy and modernize the grid to accommodate beneficial electrification for heating and transportation?
3. Do you see that natural gas has a place in the energy transition? What renewable energy technologies do you see as most important for the future?
4. What potential do you see to grow the economy through climate solutions?
5. What will you do to ensure that communities most vulnerable to climate change and/or most dependent on fossil fuels are prioritized in an energy transition? How will you do outreach to these communities in a way that ensures existing upgrades are accessible?
6. How would you support workforce development to expedite the transition to electrification in our state?

7. When it comes to climate solutions such as solar and wind, what do you believe is the best way to balance public and private ownership of resources?

## **SOCIAL & ANTIRACIST JUSTICE**

1. What kind of plans for housing and other supportive infrastructure for climate refugees and other New Mainers do you have for your district?
2. How, if at all, does Maine's affordable housing crisis tie into the climate crisis? Do you see both problems simultaneously worsening? What are some solutions that can improve both?
3. Following the Dobbs decision earlier this year, many states have curbed *reproductive freedoms*. When similar attempts to strip away reproductive rights are made in Maine, how do you plan to defend the right to choose and access reproductive healthcare?

*Reproductive freedoms: from [Eva Hernandez-Simmons](#): "No one should ever be forced to choose between raising a child in a neighborhood with lead-tainted water, polluted air, and sweltering heat or not having a child. That is no choice at all."*

4. Many school boards have restricted books and speech related to antiracist perspectives of American history and discussions of queer gender identity. In other states, this has taken the form of banning discussions of colonization and slavery in American history, banning books, dismantling gay and trans rights in schools, banning climate education, and more. How will you support students and teachers against these censorship attempts?

## **TRANSPORTATION**

1. Transportation is the largest contributor to Maine's greenhouse gasses at 54%. What is your preferred strategy to reduce these emissions and transform the transportation sector?
2. Maine invests less than a dollar per capita for public transportation whereas Vermont invests \$12 per capita/ per year. What is your view as to public transportation for Maine?
3. A large portion of automobile trips are two miles or less. How would you promote safer walking and cycling in our cities and towns to encourage residents to replace auto travel with healthier and less polluting modes of travel?

## **BUILDINGS**

- For new construction, would you support updating building codes to make sure all new homes are of an energy saving design since heating, cooling and lighting of buildings is responsible for 30% of Maine's greenhouse gas emissions?
- *Elise offers to look up the details in the CAP around code updates*

## **LAND MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH**

1. The pandemic has exposed weaknesses in Maine's public health infrastructure. The climate crisis is adding new challenges to Maine's health system. How can you as an elected representative help us respond to these new and future threats?
2. With increasingly erratic weather, sea level rise, and industrial agriculture's heavy dependence on fossil fuels, climate change poses a grave threat to our food system. What is your plan to increase Maine farmers' resilience to climate change, increase food security, and revitalize our rural communities?
3. *Regenerative agriculture* has been touted as a way to increase local food resiliency, while helping to draw down carbon from the atmosphere. How would you promote the expansion of climate-friendly agriculture?

*Regenerative agriculture describes agricultural practices that focus on the health of the ecological system as a whole, not solely on high production yields of crops. These practices can include: topsoil regeneration, increasing biodiversity, improving the water cycle, enhancing ecosystem services, supporting biosequestration, increasing resilience to climate change, and strengthening the health and vitality of farm soil.*

4. Solar power has seen a recent rapid expansion in Maine. Many communities are passing moratoriums or restrictions on siting solar arrays as they see important agricultural lands and diverse forest ecosystems converted to solar farms. How do you envision the state's role in regulating the siting of solar arrays?