

Climate Action Alliance of the Valley  
2015 Virginia General Assembly Candidates Questionnaire

**INTRODUCTION**

The Climate Action Alliance of the Valley (CAAV) is a volunteer, grass-roots not for profit organization, headquartered in Harrisonburg, with over 450 members.

CAAV's mission is to limit the impact of humans on Earth's climate, thereby providing for the common good by protecting the future of Earth and its inhabitants. CAAV's goal is to have legislators who are familiar with the best scientific understanding of climate change so that they will consider the climatic impacts of any decisions they make. By so doing we hope to bring about the systemic change required to protect Earth's climate and its associated benefits for current and future generations.

As you are a candidate in the November 2015 election for a General Assembly seat representing a district in the CAAV area, we request your completion and return of this questionnaire by e-mail to: [contactcaav@gmail.com](mailto:contactcaav@gmail.com). By using this electronic format the document will automatically expand to accommodate your narrative responses while retaining the sequence of questions. Upon receipt, your reply will be converted without modification or editing into pdf format and posted on our website ([climateactionallianceofthevalley.org](http://climateactionallianceofthevalley.org)). The pdf version will also be sent to all CAAV members via our email list. **Please return the completed questionnaire to us by September 11, 2015.**

**Name:**

**Office you are seeking:**

1. The U.S. EPA issued its final **Clean Power Plan (CPP)** on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The CPP is "designed to strengthen the fast-growing trend toward cleaner and lower-polluting American energy. ... These final emission guidelines, which rely in large part on already clearly emerging growth in clean energy innovation, development and deployment, will lead to significant carbon dioxide (CO2) emission reductions from the utility power sector that will help protect human health and the environment from the impacts of climate change."

**What legislation will you introduce or support to help Virginia meet its Clean Power Plan goals?**

2. The **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)** is a cooperative effort among the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont to cap and reduce CO2 emissions from the power sector. Through 2013, more than \$1 billion in RGGI auction proceeds were invested in programs including energy efficiency, clean and renewable energy, greenhouse gas abatement, and direct bill assistance. RGGI is one tool that can help Virginia meet its Clean Power Plan goals.

**Will you introduce or support legislation calling for Virginia to join the current RGGI coalition, or another multi-state cooperative effort modeled on RGGI? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Please explain your position.**

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3. The 2015 General Assembly passed SB1349, regarding **electric utility rates**, which includes provisions that bar the State Corporation Commission (SCC) from conducting a biennial review of the rates, terms, and conditions for any service of Dominion Virginia Power for the eight test periods beginning January 1, 2013, and ending December 31, 2020, a “Transitional Rate Period” that coincides with the early phase for implementation of the EPA Clean Power Plan. Recently, the SCC staff has issued findings that Dominion owes rate-payers \$64M in refunds and that Dominion’s base rates are currently too high by about \$312 million a year.

**Will you introduce or support legislation that rescinds SB1349 so that the State Corporation Commission can resume its statutory responsibilities regarding electric utility rates? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_**  
**Please explain your position.**

4. Beyond the Clean Power Plan goals, Virginia has the option of supporting the increased use of **renewable energy**, principally solar and wind sources, and to increase **energy efficiency**.

**Will you introduce or support legislation that removes or reduces statutory limitations on the adoption of renewable energy? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_** Please explain your position.

5. **Climate Change Impacts** are already being detected and are projected to increase in Virginia. Virginia's coastal zone is the second most vulnerable region in the U.S.—surpassed only by the area surrounding New Orleans—to the predicted impacts of climate change. Additional impacts across all of Virginia will include increasing incidents of extreme heat, drought, flooding, extreme weather, and infectious diseases.

**What legislation will you introduce or support to help Virginia mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts?**

6. Over the past 20 years, Virginia has provided more than \$500 million in **tax credits to the coal industry**. Coal is the most greenhouse gas emitting power source. In 2012, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) issued a report which was strongly critical of these tax credits, which are currently set to expire January 1, 2017.

**Will you pledge to allow the coal industry tax credits to expire on January 1, 2017? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_**  
**Please explain your position.**

7. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s Annual CO2 Inventory for the Commonwealth of Virginia, 51% of our carbon emissions are coming from the **transportation sector**.

**What legislation, such as reduced taxes on alternative fuel vehicles, increased availability of light rail passenger service, expanded adoption of alternative fuel vehicles for state and local government fleets, will you introduce or support to help reduce carbon emissions from Virginia’s transportation sector?**

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8. **Methane** is a main component of natural gas and has a global warming potential more than 25-times greater than CO<sub>2</sub>. Nearly 30 percent of methane emissions in the U.S. in 2012 came from oil production and the production, processing, transmission and distribution of natural gas. Methane emissions from the oil and gas industry are projected to increase by about 25 percent over the next decade if additional steps are not taken to reduce emissions from this rapidly growing industry. The U.S. EPA issued proposed methane regulations on August 18, 2015.

**Will you take legislative actions that will facilitate Virginia's adoption of, and compliance with, these proposed regulations? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Please explain your position**

9. Please describe any **other actions** you would take in the General Assembly to help Virginia reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, support the adoption of renewable energy, and manage the impacts of climate change.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

#### **Attachment**

Web-sourced references:

#### **EPA Clean Power Plan**

1. US EPA Clean Power Plan, final version: <http://www2.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan>
2. US EPA CPP, Virginia goals: <http://www.epa.gov/airquality/cpptoolbox/virginia.pdf>

**Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative** - <http://www.rggi.org/>

#### **Electric Utility Regulation**

1. Legislation - <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?151+sum+SB1349>
2. News of SCC staff findings - [http://www.fredericksburg.com/news/virginia/state-regulators-say-dominion-charging-excessive-rates/article\\_87b1fc70-41fe-11e5-ab2b-cb52cbe934a9.html](http://www.fredericksburg.com/news/virginia/state-regulators-say-dominion-charging-excessive-rates/article_87b1fc70-41fe-11e5-ab2b-cb52cbe934a9.html)

#### **Renewable Energy**

1. [http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/states/state\\_home.cfm/state=VA](http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/states/state_home.cfm/state=VA)
2. <http://www.nrdc.org/energy/renewables/virginia.asp>
3. <http://www.acore.org/files/pdfs/states/Virginia.pdf>
4. <http://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/virginia-solar>

#### **Climate Change Impacts**

1. Coastal - <http://www.vims.edu/research/units/programs/icccr/index.php>
2. Multi-sector - <http://www.nrdc.org/health/climate/va.asp>

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**Transportation** - [http://www.afdc.energy.gov/laws/state\\_summary?state=VA](http://www.afdc.energy.gov/laws/state_summary?state=VA)

**Methane**

1. EPA factsheet - <http://www.epa.gov/airquality/oilandgas/pdfs/20150114fs.pdf>
2. EPA proposed regulations - <http://www.epa.gov/airquality/oilandgas/>