

H-burg City Council Candidates perspectives on climate change

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- Do you believe that climate change is a human-caused phenomena? Please explain.



Paloma Saucedo: Yes, I absolutely do! There is no doubt that human activity, especially since the industrialization age, has had significant impact on increasing greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Fossil fuels as a source of energy have undoubtedly revolutionized human kind's way of life, but in our haste to exploit this "cheap" energy source, we lost sight of our responsibility to be good stewards of our planet and the delicate ecosystems it supports, in sustaining life. Additionally, our increasing demand and appetite for meat-based diets drives up an inhumane market of raising sentient beings purely for meat, through methods and means that release an inordinate amount of methane into the atmosphere.



Sal Romero: Yes and there is no real debate to have over this question as it is stated. The vast majority of climate scientists across the globe have found that our climate is warming due to human activities. I greatly value the work and expertise of professionals in the field and I have personally seen the drastic changes of our climate locally and around the world.



Frank McMillan: My stance on global climate change is one that many scientists have. Climate change is caused by many things, and humans are the biggest contributors to it. We have done nothing but help expand the greenhouse effect.



Chris Jones: I certainly believe that the poor preservation of our environment and the large amount of pollution caused by humans since the Industrial Age has harmed our environment. Even if climate change is a part of the natural evolution God intended for Earth one can not deny that humans have sped up the deterioration of natural resources including our atmosphere. Humans have either caused or accelerated climate change.



Carolyn Frank: Yes. We are responsible for changing the atmosphere by our emissions. Plus, we have cleared the land of trees that absorb carbon dioxide.

Do you think that state and local governments have a responsibility to take actions to prevent catastrophic climate change? If yes, what actions should be taken in Harrisonburg?

Paloma Saucedo: Yes, I do. This is a large and complex problem that requires all hands-on-deck! Private industry's innovative capacity is certainly part of the solution, but without government participation to scale that up from local governments, to national government and global governing organizations, we are doomed to fail.



If yes, what actions should be taken in Harrisonburg?

In item number IX of my ten point campaign platform, I call for “Sustainable forms of generating clean energy, water, food, and air” by:

- Cultivating a culture for climate resilience and recovery.
- Expanding the supply of our regional food system through farm-to-city partnerships and community produce markets.
- Increasing institutional and community based efforts for waste reduction (e.g. compost hubs, catchment and use of rainwater).
- Encouraging changes to the wood utilization act so use of urban trees are accessible to community members and for local economic opportunities (including coppiced woodlots for wood gasification as an energy source)
- Adopting/adapting Soul Fire Farm's [Food Sovereignty Action Steps](#) for People and Policy with proposals from [Everyone at the Table: A Community Food Equity Assessment for the Harrisonburg, VA](#).
- Adopting/adapting the Movement for Black Lives Platform related to [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Land, Air, and Water](#), and [End Privatization of Resources](#).



Sal Romero: I believe that action must be taken at every level, from individuals to businesses and governments. For local government, this means we must intentionally consider the impacts of all proposals, but particularly for land use, building development, and energy before any decisions are made. This will require the active participation of experts and innovators in our community to help shape careful plans and alternatives to historical assumptions. I promise to seek out these voices and to advocate for their recommendations.



Frank McMillan: Yes, locally we need to invest more in renewable energy. We need to encourage companies who are environmentally-friendly to come to our city. A company that gets tax incentives to pick up our recyclables from our homes is an action that has to happen. Another step our city needs to take is switching to LED lights would be significantly more efficient and better for the environment. Sure, investing in renewable energy sources is expensive at first, however, the amount of money we save in the long-run is well worth the investment.



Chris Jones: Harrisonburg should start by adopting the ideas submitted by EPSAC and hire a sustainability coordinator. We need to have a point person to ensure we are acting in an efficient and environmentally friendly manner. I would love to see a city wide education campaign led by the city to teach residents how to live in greater harmony with the earth.



Carolyn Frank: The City of Harrisonburg is committed to reducing negative impacts on the local, regional, and global environment and strives toward being a good steward of the resources to which it has been entrusted. I support the plan presented and endorsed to the City Council by the Environmental Performance Standards Advisory Committee. You are to commended on your hard work and recommendations to make the city cleaner and sustainable for future generations. There is much to be done.