

Climate Action Alliance of the Valley
2023 Virginia General Assembly Candidates Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

The Climate Action Alliance of the Valley (CAAV) is a volunteer, grassroots nonprofit organization, headquartered in Harrisonburg, with over 540 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 implications, including risks, 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 2023 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. We have also attached the questionnaire in Word format in case you prefer to use it rather than replying directly in this email. Upon receipt, your reply will be converted without modification or editing into pdf format and posted on our website (<https://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 30, 2023.**

Name: Randall Wolf

Office you are seeking: House of Delegates, District 36

1. The Shenandoah Valley is experiencing more frequent and more severe extreme weather events as a likely result of climate change, including heat waves and unhealthy levels of air pollution, and we are at increased risk of flooding events. These events negatively affect all of us, but disproportionately impact historically disadvantaged and low-income communities. These communities suffer the negative impacts of local industry, such as pollution, but too often do not receive any of the benefits of the wealth generated by these industries. Legislation has been introduced in other states to address the cumulative impacts of pollution in permitting decisions and expand the types of legal actions available to individuals whose health and well-being have been impacted by pollution.

What legislation will you introduce or support to address environmental justice concerns?

Legislation will need to be to address so many items regarding our changing weather and the impacts on people who live, work, and play in Virginia. I will assure that these programs will protect historically disadvantaged groups and low income communities and the people who live there. This may even be an opportunity to address past decisions that negatively impacted these groups.

I believe that renewable energy is critical to address this. I would reengage with RGGI.

We have to review flood zones and how the insurance industry serves people who may be affected by dramatic weather events in the future. We also need to look at wildfire zones where building would be prevent just as we do with flooding.

Climate Action Alliance of the Valley
2023 Virginia General Assembly Candidates Questionnaire

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, Vermont, and Virginia to cap and reduce CO2 emissions from the power sector. Through July 2023, more than \$500 million in RGGI auction proceeds have already been invested in Virginia businesses through energy efficiency, clean and renewable energy, greenhouse gas abatement, and direct bill assistance programs. RGGI is a major tool that can help low-income Virginia's reduce their energy bills and stay in their homes. It is also a very effective way to enable communities to improve their flood resilience and preparedness. Currently there is no clear plan for replacing the RGGI funds should Virginia cease its participation in the program.

Will you introduce or support legislation supporting Virginia's continued participation in the RGGI coalition? Yes X No ___ Please explain your position.

It's ridiculous that Gov. Youngkin removed us from this important environmental program. I will support legislation to have Virginia return to RGGI and seek bills to provide programs for low and middle income people to gain access and the benefits of low cost renewable energy. We need to address increase flooding and provide security for all communities. In some cases this could be an opportunity to address past actions by Virginia regarding low income and minority communities.

If not, will you introduce or support legislation to replace the funding streams that RGGI has provided? Yes ___ No ___ Please explain your position.

3. Will you introduce or support legislation that further restores the authority of the State Corporation Commission to set fair rates and charges for ratepayers? Yes X No ___ If yes, please describe the legislation you will introduce or would support. If no, please explain your position.

I'm sorry, but this legislation would need to be worked out with experts and stakeholders, I'm not in a position to suggest wording for this legislation now.

4. Beyond the Virginia Clean Economy Act, 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 encourages or incentivizes the adoption of more renewable energy and improved energy efficiency? Yes X No ___ If yes, will you include individual and small scale distributed solar in such legislation? If not, please explain your position.

I would propose legislation that requires any new building projects in Virginia that use taxpayer funds, grants or bonds to have a minimum of 50 percent of their electricity come from renewable energy. Virginia needs to lead and set the example for how to incorporate renewable energy in building projects.

Climate Action Alliance of the Valley
2023 Virginia General Assembly Candidates Questionnaire

5. **The risks and costs of the climate crisis** 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, including sea level rise. Additional impacts across all of Virginia will include increasing incidents of extreme heat, drought, flooding, extreme weather, and infectious diseases beyond what we have already experienced.

What legislation will you introduce or support to help Virginia mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts? If none, please explain your position.

I do not have specific legislation,

6. 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 a Low Carbon Fuel Standard, tax incentives for EVs, electric bike incentives, increased availability of light rail passenger service, requirements for more rural transit/microtransit options, will you introduce or support to help reduce carbon emissions from Virginia's transportation sector? If none, please explain your position.

I strongly support EV's and alternative transportation for human locomotion. I would support tax refunds for eBikes, EV's and other incentives for people who walk or use public transportation. I would also push VDOT to increase building public infrastructure for people who walk or bike at transportation, not just recreation.

7. Virginia has some of the weakest campaign finance laws in the country. **Will you pledge to support campaign finance reforms to limit the amount any one person or organization can give to a candidate and require more transparency in disclosures? Yes X No ___** Please explain your position.

I would like to see the current federal laws be put in place for Virginia.

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 increased energy efficiency, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

I've been a board member of the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition and a advocate for biking and walking for decades. Currently I'm part of the organizing team for a walk bike summit in Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County. I'm also active with a local group of family farmers who have a proposal for a 700 acre solar project that is being blocked in Augusta County. These issues are important to me and I will see as many avenues to promote reducing greenhouse gases and increasing the health of the people of Virginia.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please return to contactcaav@gmail.com.

Climate Action Alliance of the Valley
2023 Virginia General Assembly Candidates Questionnaire

Appendix

Web-sourced references:

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

Electric Utility Regulation

Renewable Energy

1. 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>

Transportation - http://www.afdc.energy.gov/laws/state_summary?state=VA