

Climate Change and Other Earthcare Questions for Candidates in 2024 Elections

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) FCNL Working Group

Below is a selection of earthcare-related questions you can ask candidates, not only to determine their positions on climate change and other earthcare issues, but also to let them know how important these matters are to you. Many faith, justice, and environmental groups view the 2024 elections as a vote for our future survival. We offer these questions as a tool to help you vote your conscience.

There are several questions below. *Please do not feel you need to use all the questions, just the ones you wish to give your candidates.*

Most of these are general questions that could apply to someone running for office at any level of government. Others are specific to national government. And, of course, there may be issues specific to your community, such as oil pipeline projects, liquid natural gas export terminals, the Willow Project, hydrogen hubs, or protecting wildlife refuges that we do not cover here. We specifically avoided partisan statements, and we tried to be positive while still holding candidates accountable. We also intentionally provided some overlap in topics in the hope that everyone can find something here that is useful in their particular circumstances.

NOTE: following the questions is more information about getting these to candidates.

1. The world continues to break records for global heating and severe weather events, including in the U.S. Do you agree that fossil fuels are responsible for most of the climate change we have seen over the past 50 years? (Wording useful for candidates at local, state, or federal levels)
2. According to recent polls, the majority of people in the U.S. are “concerned” or “alarmed” about climate change. Do you believe that addressing climate change, at all levels, is critical to protecting the security and well-being of the U.S.? (Wording useful for candidates at local, state, or federal levels)
3. Climate change is one of the biggest threats to the future of our children and future generations and all life on Earth. Do you see climate change as a critical issue for government at all levels? (Wording useful for candidates at local, state, or federal levels)
4. Do you believe it is important for the United States to remain in the Paris Climate Agreement and continue to help lead the international effort to address climate change? (Wording useful for candidates at local, state, or federal levels)
5. The U.S. is now the world’s largest single producer of fossil fuels, and despite our country’s ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, U.S. producers plan to

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increase oil and gas drilling and production. Do you support this expansion? (Wording useful for candidates at local, state, or federal levels)

6. Climate change is considered by the U.S. Department of Defense to be one of the biggest threats to national security, now and in the future. Do you agree? (Wording useful for candidates at local, state, or federal levels)

7. As the largest global contributor to greenhouse gas emissions historically and the second largest currently, does the U.S., at all levels, have a special responsibility to the rest of the world to curb our fossil fuel use and transition to clean energy? (Wording useful for candidates at local, state, or federal levels)

8. Many experts recognize the need for climate-smart agriculture to help reduce excess carbon pollution from industrial farming and to make food production more resilient in the face of climate change. Do you support policies to promote climate-smart agriculture? (Wording useful for candidates at local, state, or federal levels)

9. About 70% of the world's wildlife species are in decline, including many species in the U.S. Will you protect public land in the U.S., from exploitation/extraction/development in order to protect wildlife? (Wording useful for candidates at local, state, or federal levels, perhaps with slight editing)

10. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has meant an investment of almost \$300 billion in wind, solar, and energy storage in this country in the first year alone. If elected, would you work to protect the IRA? (Wording primarily useful for candidates at the federal level)

11. The Environmental Protection Agency has recently announced a \$4.3 billion investment fund for local clean energy programs. What is your position on such a fund? (Wording primarily useful for candidates at the federal level)

12. Do you believe there should be restrictions on the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies to regulate environmental pollutants? (Wording primarily useful for candidates at the federal level)

13. The Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies have primary responsibility for regulating pesticides and other environmental toxins to protect human and animal health. Do you think the funding of these agencies should be increased or cut? (Wording primarily useful for candidates at the federal level)

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More information that may be useful for sending these questions to candidates.

How to give them to your federal, state, and/or local candidates. The more personal, the better. If you can ask these questions yourself or hand these to a candidate, great (e.g., at a town hall meeting, debate or rally)! Also, your candidates may have local offices where you can drop off your questions or mail them. Make sure to include your address so they can respond and so it's clear you are a constituent.

In addition, many candidates you may wish to contact have websites that invite communication. Pasting the questions with a little introductory sentence may be an easy way to get these questions to candidates. The websites also may have postal addresses.

- How to find who your candidates are? Check websites like <https://www.vote411.org/> (“find what’s on your ballot”).
- How to find the website of a specific candidate? “Google” the candidate’s name or contact your Secretary of State’s office

(Feel free to contact Suellen Lowry, suellenquaker@gmail.com, if these steps for locating contact information for a candidate don’t work for you.)

- Possible introductory sentence: *I am one of your faith-based [or Quaker] constituents, and I care a great deal about our responsibility to take care of the environment. This is also key to the future of our children and grandchildren and all life on Earth. Please read and answer the following questions and send me your responses, at [your email or other contact information]. THANK YOU so much! [your name and address to show you are a constituent]*