

QUESTIONS FROM GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE CLIMATE FORUMS - MARCH 8 and MARCH 9, 2022

Climate Policies

**1. How important is it for you to make Maryland a leader in fighting climate change, and to be seen as a climate leader yourself?**

- a. Addressing environmental issues will be a top priority for my administration. Although I have specific pledges to address this issue, which can be found at [franchot.com/pledges](https://franchot.com/pledges) it is important to note that I will adopt an integrative approach, such that all of the policies I implement will be evaluated based on their sustainability.
- b. As the home of the Chesapeake Bay and eighteen national parks, addressing climate change will be a critical priority for my administration. As Governor, I have pledged to make Maryland 100% energy independent via renewable energy, achieve Net Zero carbon emissions before any other state, and continue on past progress to clean up the Bay. I am very pleased that the Maryland General Assembly passed the Climate Solutions Now Act. It is an important step forward. It is vital that we have executive leadership that can deliver results and provide the necessary accountability to help us secure a more green future for Maryland.

**2. Would you hire a climate czar in your administration? If so, what would that person's responsibilities be?**

- a. Yes. As the federal government does with its Climate Envoy, I am committed to creating a cabinet level position that will work hand-in-hand with our state agencies to develop a vision for Maryland's environmental health and aid in the implementation to tackle climate change both in the state, and regionally. As the largest estuary in the United States, and one of Maryland's most prized natural resources, the Chesapeake Bay runs across six states. It is vital that our climate change policies reflect the geographical range of one of our State's most prized resources. Within the first year of my term, this appointee will also be responsible for publicly issuing a report on Maryland's environmental health, and outlining priority action items for the administration. This will position Maryland to be a leader in best practices that will secure a sustainable future for generations to come.

**3. What efforts will your administration support to decarbonize Maryland's government operations and/or the Maryland economy? Will you commit to**

**investing in green or environmentally friendly schools, libraries and other public facilities to continue the reduction of Maryland's carbon footprint?**

- a. I will mandate all new buildings be solar-ready, all new state-funded buildings (including schools) include solar roofs; establish incentives and other measures to convert existing buildings that rely on fracked-gas to reliance on electric HVAC, water heating, and appliances. I will also incentivize green best practices such as more permeable surfaces, living roofs and walls, and rain gardens.
- b. On Day 1 as governor, I will sign an executive order that requires all energy consumed by state government entities to be created by 100% renewable energy where possible, with a mandate for full conversion by the end of my first term. I will also sign an executive order that requires more renewable energy be created within Maryland than all energy consumed within the state. Furthermore, within the first term of my administration, the entire fleet of state vehicles will convert to electric. These initiatives are measurable goals that I know my administration can accomplish.
- c. I believe the greatest challenge has never been the lack of will to support these initiatives, but rather to ensure there is an adequate stream of revenue to not only start these initiatives, but secure the infrastructure and funding for long-lasting results. As Comptroller, I have never been one to over promise and under deliver. As such, when it comes to important issues such as climate change, I will make sure these initiatives have the structural and financial solvency to serve generations to come.

**4. What are your plans for increasing access to affordable renewable energy for Maryland residents?**

- a. In my pledges, I have committed to a pricing model that caps the cost of renewable energy at a fixed percentage of household income for lower income households, in order to ensure that the transition to renewable energy does not create economic hardship.

**5. Does nuclear power need to be part of Maryland's clean energy portfolio? How do you propose to safely store nuclear waste from the Calvert Cliffs plant?**

- a. I am open to exploring all forms of renewable energy to be a part of

Maryland's clean energy portfolio. Nuclear energy presents challenges because the material used is not renewable and consideration must be given to nuclear waste. To reduce habitat loss and pollution, I believe that the safest way to store nuclear waste is through deep geological disposal. The proper use of nuclear energy is as a bridge energy that helps us transition to fully renewable energy, and phases out once we have the capacity to function via fully renewable energy sources.

**6. How would you commit to working with environmental justice advocacy organizations in Maryland to help you identify and select the heads of agencies and commissions responsible for protecting our environment? Do you feel the state should diversify the leaders on environmental commissions and in agencies?**

- a. I will work hand-in-hand with advocates to solicit input on key appointments, and am deeply committed to building a leadership team that reflects the state's diversity.
- b. I was the first candidate to come out with a dedicated policy proposal, titled "A Level Playing Field" to address the systemic discrimination across a range of areas, including environmental injustice. One of the pledges I have made within this proposal is to create an office for the Secretary of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), whose purview includes not only a far reaching review of existing state policies, but responsibility for making sure that new policies developed and deployed by my administration are equitable. The Secretary of DE&I will work alongside our climate change appointee, state and local agencies, and community organizations. I recognize that addressing environmental issues such as pollution and clean water are essential for achieving equity and ensuring that ALL Marylanders can thrive in ecosystems that are not tarnished.

**7. How will you prioritize and ensure funding allocated to address environmental injustice will be used in the communities impacted most by climate change - and who will oversee this effort?**

- a. Environmental justice is vital to creating A Level Playing Field, one of my campaign's flagship agendas. One of my goals is to reduce illnesses such as asthma by 20% by 2030. I believe creating trackable, metric based goals like these, especially those that track physical, mental, and financial health, are a vital part of ensuring our resources are allocated equitably and have equitable outcomes. Polluters like the Baltimore incinerator are disproportionately placed in communities of color and exacerbate many of these types of illnesses. I am committed to removing these polluters and

properly classifying renewable energy so that incineration is not included, and that ALL Marylanders have an improved quality of life. Our climate appointee and Secretary of DE&I will work hand-in-hand to ensure adequate and sustainable funding to address environmental injustices. Moreover, as we shift to a green State, I am also committed to providing job training and placement for those who work in industries that will become increasingly obsolete in the new economy. No Marylander should be left behind in our path forward.

### Agriculture and Water Quality

- 8. Agricultural runoff is widely accepted to be the biggest contributor to Chesapeake Bay pollution. How do you plan to reduce farm runoff? Have you accepted or do you plan to accept any campaign contributions from the poultry industry?**
- a. From oysters and crabs to waterfowl and clipper ships, Maryland has always been identified with the Chesapeake Bay. The Bay is an immeasurable treasure of biodiversity and one of the world's most important and productive bodies of water. But much work remains to return the Chesapeake to good health and preserve its legacy for future generations.
  - b. We will have an increased effort to conserve land near our waterways to help in reducing urban and suburban stormwater runoff. We will also strengthen state smart growth regulations that combat urban sprawl and promote dense, transit-oriented development. We will also work with President Biden's EPA and Pennsylvania and New York to ensure accountability to meet upstream pollution reduction targets that will protect the Bay. I also believe in a statewide effort to preserve Maryland's tree canopy, particularly old growth forests, because of the soil preservation and filtration impacts that root systems have.
- 9. The state does not regulate or monitor emissions from poultry plants on the Shore, even though residents there have complained about ill effects from the ammonia and other greenhouse gasses. As governor, would you monitor this air quality?**
- a. Yes. Additionally, I will put a moratorium on new concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs); end subsidies for methane digesters; hold poultry integrators financially responsible for the waste created by contract poultry growers; and invest in monitoring and, where called for, enforcement against poultry farms violating the Clean Water Act.
- 10. Plastics are a major source of pollution for fish and crabs. Individual cities**

**have instituted plastic bag bills, but most jurisdictions do not have them, and the state does not have one, either. As governor, what would you do to reduce plastic and microplastics in our waterways? What measures will you take to require manufacturers and merchants to cover the true cost of their production and use of plastics?**

- a. I will limit the use of plastic products (such as limiting or prohibiting use of plastic shopping bags, plasticware and plastic straws in restaurants, and/or sample-size bottles in hotels and motels); establish producer-responsibility waste-management programs; establish a bottle-return program; expand composting programs or resources; and regulate the disposal of artificial turf and artificial play surfaces.

### Transportation

**11. Do you plan to revive the Red Line proposal in Baltimore? How would you make up for the economic development lost to Baltimore since Gov. Hogan killed the Red Line?'**

- a. Yes, I will revive the Red Line project. You cannot have a great state without a great city. Baltimore will be a vibrant city, and will be the epicenter for economic and educational opportunities. Baltimore will have several family supporting job opportunities, as part of my 100,000 jobs in 100 weeks pledge. Additionally, I will also resource and expand the [Maryland Port Administration's Vision 2025 Plan](#) to ensure state-of-the-art facilities give the Port of Baltimore a competitive advantage and augment the transportation infrastructure that serves the Port and connects it with traditional manufacturing hubs like Dundalk.

**12. Do you support proceeding with Gov. Hogan's plans to widen the Capital Beltway and Interstate 270? Do you anticipate that the next governor will be able to kill or alter the project?**

- a. In the I-270 corridor, I will explore innovative new connections between Frederick and the Washington region including rail and a WMATA line that runs adjacent to the new American Legion Bridge. As a current member of the Board of Public Works, to receive my support and recent vote to move forward with transportation improvements in this corridor, I demanded that no shovels go in the ground until a full environmental review was complete, that a portion of toll revenue goes to mass transit projects, that buses be able to use the toll lanes for free, amid other reforms that made this project better for the environment and commuters.
- b. The reality is that the Beltway-270 gridlock is untenable, and it needs a near term solution in order to address a very real quality of life issue for commuters, and to keep Maryland economically competitive with

Virginia. I believe the long term solutions hinge on more dense, transit oriented development, and better public transportation, but we cannot flip a switch and remove a century of auto-oriented development. We must wean ourselves from car dependency without turning our back on those who are still dependent on automobiles.

**13. During the pandemic, transit ridership has fallen across the country. Because Baltimore's workforce has a high percentage of essential workers, Baltimore's ridership fell about 55-60% compared to 94% in the California bay area. With two out of three jobs in our region requiring at least a 90-minute commute by public transportation, how would you determine the level of investments you would make in public transit services?**

a. I have had several meetings with Baltimore public transit advocates, discussing how to create a world-class transit system. I believe Baltimore can be the leader for innovation in ALL industries. However, this will not become a reality when only 9% of jobs are accessible by public transit in an hour or less. It is critical that we develop a transportation system that would give all Marylanders the freedom to experience everything the state has to offer. Our transportation system will be known for being fast, safe, sustainable, and reliable. I am committed to working with community organizations and MDOT to achieve these goals. We must improve investments in our bus routes and scale the use of circulators. We must revive the Red Line. And we must improve MARC service. I will also increase the number of bike lanes and invest in bike share stations.

**14. Shortly after coming to office, Gov. Hogan canceled the shovel-ready Red Line light rail project that would have brought 10,000 jobs in a five-year construction phase, dramatically reduced commute times, and \$3.0 - \$6.5 billion in transit-oriented-development. The Purple Line from Bethesda to New Carrollton was approved for construction and already has \$12.0 billion committed to development along its corridor. How would you make up for the economic development lost to Baltimore?**

a. My commitment to secure 100,000 jobs in 100 weeks will result in an influx of family supporting jobs, specifically as we invest in improving Baltimore's infrastructure. That means fully leveraging existing assets like the Port and BWI, but also breaking ground on new infrastructure projects and ensuring they include Project Labor Agreements and Community Benefits Agreements that include local hire provisions, labor peace, and family supporting wages. I will also improve funding for key incubator spaces for potential innovation and economic activity like Baltimore's HBCUs.

Climate Mitigation Measures

**15. We are losing many historic sites on the Eastern Shore, including Black churches, due to sea-level rise. The Maryland Historical Trust has very little funding to assist with rebuilding and relocating. How would you allocate resources to ensure we do not lose this history?**

- a. Our climate change appointee will work with local officials and community organizations to develop a land preservation task force that will work to reduce sea-level rise and funding for preserving historic sites, and in worst case scenarios relocating historic sites that may be required to move.

**16. What efforts will your administration support to decarbonize Maryland's government operations and/or the Maryland economy? Will you commit to investing in green or environmentally friendly schools, libraries and other public facilities to continue the reduction of Maryland's carbon footprint?**

- a. I am a firm believer that the government must set the example for developing and implementing best practices to address climate change. I will adopt an integrative approach, and all of the policies I will implement will be evaluated based on their sustainability. My answers throughout this document have outlined some of the actions I will take. To summarize:
  - b. I have pledged to work toward making Maryland the first net-zero state in the US and a net supplier of renewable energy.
  - c. I will sign an executive order that requires all energy consumed by state government entities to be created by one-hundred percent renewable energy where possible, with a mandate for full conversion by the end of my first term.
  - d. I will also sign an executive order that requires more renewable energy to be created within Maryland than all energy consumed within the state.
  - e. Finally, I will also pilot a progressive electricity cost model that caps the cost of electricity at a percentage of household income for our most vulnerable households. Investing in renewable energy infrastructure is not only about creating jobs, but about reversing environmental, social, and

## Gubernatorial Forum Responses from: Peter Franchot

economic injustices.