

Gubernatorial Forum Responses from: Doug Gansler

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

Climate Policies

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

Climate change is one of the greatest moral challenges of our time, and Maryland must be a leader. It's a moral challenge because our failure to act will disproportionately threaten the safety and security of the poorest in our society. It is an issue of environmental justice for these communities and for the generation yet to be born who has no voice in the decisions being made today.

Maryland must also be a leader because we are at the forefront of the harms from a changing climate. With more than 3,000 miles of shoreline, and approximately 265,000 acres of land that is less than five feet above sea level, Maryland's coastal communities are among the most vulnerable in the country.

And we ought to be a leader, because we can grow our economy if we encourage the industries that will fight climate change to develop here. What Michigan is to cars, what Hollywood is to movies, I believe Maryland can be to innovative climate solutions.

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

I will not just appoint a climate czar, but I will be a Governor who lives, breathes, and feels the environment, just as I was as Attorney General. That's why I went after American Electric and got a \$4.6 billion settlement; that's why I went after PPG in West Virginia, who was polluting and putting mercury over western Maryland; and that's why I went after Constellation. And I did it in partnership with organizations like the League of Conservation Voters. I will have an Environmental Council like I had when I was Attorney General, and I'm going to have the nonprofits in the room, helping us shape our future.

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

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

Maryland must transition to a 100% electrified economy in the next twenty years. My administration will help us begin that transition. I will convert the State of Maryland's entire fleet of light duty vehicles from fuel-powered to electric within five years. My administration will initiate construction on four Gigawatts of offshore wind generation by 2026. We will work closely with the private sector toward the development of a state-of-the-art plant that would convert poultry waste into renewable energy. We will provide state technical and funding support for cities and towns to establish clean energy "microgrids" that will provide renewable energy and make smaller communities more economically viable.

We will also require that all public school, college and university construction projects funded by the State obtain at least a portion of their electricity from renewable energy sources, proportional to the State's contribution to the project. And I will expand the use of state-owned properties – such as state universities, corrections facilities, Program Open Space land banks and State Highway Administration surplus properties – as available leased or purchased spaces for solar farms.

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

The most important thing the Governor can do is nominate members to the Public Service Commission who understand the importance of moving forward expeditiously with clean energy projects. As Governor I will do everything I can to make sure we create clean energy as quickly as possible.

For example, my [Green Maryland plan](#) calls for the construction of four Gigawatts of offshore wind generation by 2026 and increasing the amount of funding and technical support available within the State of Maryland to incentivize wind energy development. I would also work closely with the private sector toward the development of a state-of-the-art plant that would convert poultry waste into renewable energy.

I look forward to reviewing the takeaways from Maryland's community solar pilot, as it is imperative we expand solar in order to meet our Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards (RPS) goals with truly clean energy. I was heartened to see that the program has expanded both its production capacity as well as access for low-income Marylanders, and am interested in how we continue to educate folks about the program.

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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? (College Park 46:30)

Yes, it does. Because renewables are intermittent, zero carbon consistent electricity is vital to our energy supply. If we do not use nuclear, it will be natural gas or hydroelectricity - which has its own environmental issues - that will replace nuclear power. Of course, it's vital that it be safe, but nuclear safety has come very far from the 1970s.

Storing nuclear waste need not be done in Maryland, and of course, creating nuclear energy itself does not need to be either with transmission lines. We should look to store nuclear waste in sister states with more depopulated land, as Maryland is one of the densest states in the country. It is worth noting, also, that nuclear waste is not a sludge, it's a ceramic now, which improves its safety.

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?

Communities of Color in Maryland are subject to higher levels of pollution and will suffer more from the effects of climate change without action. As Attorney General, I delivered environmental justice, obtaining settlements when ExxonMobil released more than 25,000 gallons of gasoline into Maryland waters and secured \$4.6 billion for air quality with American Electric Power, the largest environmental settlement in American history. The Gansler administration will bring that same fight to the governor's office, and will fight to ensure clean air and clean water for every single Marylander.

We will also address lead poisoning, which hurts childhood brain development and can lead to worse outcomes from education to jobs to crime. While we've made great progress in reducing lead poisoning we have more work to do. Baltimore City still has the highest rates of childhood lead poisoning, and the Gansler administration will be focused on reducing the rate of lead poisoning to zero everywhere in the state. Finally, we will address the significant "heat gap" that exists in urban communities. The Gansler Administration will make an unprecedented investment in tree planting, permeable sidewalk construction, public parks, open spaces and community gardens.

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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?

I created the first Office of Civil Rights within the Attorney General's Office because I've seen firsthand how systems oppress marginalized communities, which is one of the reasons why it's so important to have diverse teams at the table helping to correct those injustices and lead our government to doing better. If elected governor, I will make sure that my hires and appointments are representative and reflective of our population as a whole.

My philosophy on hiring and management is to find competent people with deep experience in their fields and let them do their jobs. An executive should not be a micro-manager, but one who taps into the skills and expertise of their teams. I will search for people who not only have experience and technical skills, but who also have been proven voices for those with the least amount of power.

That means ensuring those hired for environmental roles have a proven record of fighting for the environment, not for corporate polluters. I'll also be looking for people who have an understanding of how environmental racism has disproportionately impacted Black and Brown Marylanders. I also look forward to hearing the voices of environmental advocates as I make these hiring and appointment decisions.

Agriculture and Water Quality

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?

Very shortly after I became Attorney General, I was perceived as Enemy Number One to the poultry industry, which I think was unfair, but speaks to my record as somebody who will fight pollution from any powerful industry. And I will not accept campaign contributions from the industry. We also should not have to pit poultry against the environment. I support converting the 2 billion pounds of chicken manure that goes into the Bay into an environmentally sound system of getting cleaner energy, and away from getting that manure into the bay.

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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?

Yes, absolutely. Very shortly after I became Attorney General, I was perceived as Enemy Number One to the poultry industry, which I think was unfair, but speaks to my record as somebody who fights pollution from the poultry industry. We should not have to pit poultry against the environment. My Green Maryland Plan calls for converting the 2 billion pounds of chicken manure that goes into the Bay into an environmentally sound system of getting cleaner energy, and away from getting that manure into the Bay.

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? (Goucher 1:24:00)

Every county in Maryland, the whole state, should ban plastic bags and PFAS. When I was AG, we did the 22 river audits. We had to use Cy Pres funds, which are unclaimed settlement funds that we got when I was heading the environmental group within the National Association of Attorneys General. We were breaking records in securing environmental settlements against corporate polluters. So we took those funds and put in measures to reduce and pick up the trash. We practiced what we preached: every year we had a “clean up the Bay” day with the Attorney General’s office with over 800 employees and we had people come down and actually pick up the plastic bags and trash. The technology is there; there are other materials we can be using besides plastic. And we need to make sure we keep the waterways clean. We went after Omega, a company that was taking all the menhaden out of the water for fish oil, that was creating a problem for rockfish, and the environment there. We need to have living shorelines. There’s a lot we can do to clean up the waterways in Maryland.

Transportation

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?

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I will absolutely revive the Red Line. What Gov Hogan did to the Red Line was not only symbolic of his view of Baltimore, but it was a sledgehammer to the people of Baltimore City and to mass transit. We also need circulator buses in Baltimore City immediately, because 1/3 of people don't have cars in the city and they must be able to get to their jobs, and we should do it with electric buses. We also need to make sure that the citizens and the stakeholders in Baltimore are part of reviving the Red Line. We also have to make sure the Purple Line gets finished. We need to make sure we have mass transit going from Branch Ave into southern Maryland. And we need to make sure that we have the Metro going over Woodrow Wilson Bridge, as it was designed to do.

My administration will fully fund WMATA. In the short term, we must enhance the MARC service from Frederick into Montgomery County. We also need to make sure we have light rail from Shady Grove up to Frederick.

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?

I am in favor of reducing traffic and expanding mass transit options. This project, if it happens, needs to be done in an environmentally friendly manner and through proper procurement protocols.

I support shifting money away from major highway projects towards mass transit projects, which I've been consistent about for the last ten years. This is especially true at a time when more people can work from home and shift transportation patterns away from the daily surge of commuting. We need to make sure our roads are in good shape, but we should be heavily investing in public transit over highways. The only way to reduce congestion on our roads is through investment in public transit. Furthermore, in the short term, we need to stand up a vibrant and just statewide infrastructure of electric vehicle charging stations.

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?

I will take an all hands on deck approach to improving public transportation in the state. I'll restore Baltimore's Red Line to the State of Maryland's Comprehensive Transportation Plan. I'll work with the State of Maryland's jurisdictional funding partners to meet

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WMATA's long-term system preservation needs. I'll also work with our jurisdictional partners in Virginia to support the extension of Metrorail services from Prince George's County into Alexandria, via the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. My administration will plan for the future extension of light rail from the Shady Grove Metro Station into Frederick County. And I'll expand the State of Maryland's investment in suburban bus connections throughout metropolitan Baltimore.

I will double Maryland Transit Administration funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems throughout Maryland, which will provide support for greater peak-period frequencies, expanded midday, evening and weekend services, and circulator services within population and commercial centers. And I'll help secure federal funding to connect our shore communities with train service to Delaware.

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?

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Climate Mitigation Measures

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?

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In order to prepare the Eastern Shore for the changing climate we must upgrade infrastructure for increased precipitation estimates and invest in flood preparedness. To prepare for the increased precipitation we must invest in green-gray infrastructure, focus efforts on stormwater runoff, and be prepared for post-storm recovery. To mitigate damage from floods, we must develop an infrastructure plan that upgrades state infrastructure for more frequent floods and invest the necessary capital. We also must update the regulatory codes to increase the freeboard requirements in buildings and regulate coastal areas for higher flood risk than past actuarial data would suggest.

My administration will also create a climate change displacement plan to help ensure that people forced from their homes by extreme weather and flooding are resettled in Maryland with minimal disruption, from relocation expenses to school continuity planning.

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?

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