

Gubernatorial Forum Responses from: John King

2022 LCV Follow Up Questions

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?

My climate plan has the goal of making Maryland the first net-zero carbon emission state in the country. Maryland previously led the country in reducing its CO2 emissions and I intend to make us lead again. It is important to me, and the state of Maryland, to be seen as a climate leader so that we can serve as an example and show other states that it is possible to reduce our emissions, switch to clean energy and protect ourselves from sea-level rise.

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

Yes. I will appoint a State Climate Advisor within the Governor's Executive Council whose job it will be to identify and address cross-cutting opportunities to address climate change. This means they will coordinate all state government entities to meet my goal of reaching 100% clean energy in all Maryland public buildings, including our public K-12 schools and public higher education campuses by 2030.

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?

My administration will reach a carbon-free electricity sector in Maryland by 2030 and change our Renewable Portfolio Standard so it includes only clean energy sources, instead of dirty energy producers like trash incineration. All public vehicles, including school buses, will be 100% clean energy and electrified by 2030 and we will transition 60% of all Maryland cars and trucks to zero-emission vehicles by the same year. To help with this effort, my administration will add 10,000 fast charging electric vehicle stations across the state and provide incentives and education around switching to an electric, emission-free vehicle. Our public buildings, including schools, libraries and other state buildings, will reach 100% clean energy use by 2030, and we will also

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decarbonize the Port of Baltimore by 2030 as well.

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

My administration will support residential homes in the transition to clean technology through state consultations and financial support. I will replace existing subsidies for fossil fuel heating and cooling systems with grants to instead support electrification. I will prioritize the in-home consultation support and grant funding to under-resourced communities to help ensure a just transition to clean and efficient homes and buildings, and leverage partnerships with national service corps members, community-based organizations, and local businesses to provide the consultations. I am particularly interested in expanding the community solar idea introduced by Del. Charkoudian, as an example for how we can bring renewable energy to more people regardless of income or neighborhood. We will also update building and construction codes so that new construction is energy-efficient and compatible with electrification.

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?

I do not believe expanding nuclear power is an option for Maryland's clean energy portfolio. Adding reactors is a time-consuming and expensive process, which would have to be heavily subsidized to be attractive to electric companies, and, most significantly, the timeframe to build and bring online another reactor or plant is not compatible with the need to make dramatic progress on climate action in less than a decade. However, decommissioning the existing Calvert Cliffs plant would likely result in replacing its energy output with fossil fuel energy which would drastically set us back in reaching net-zero carbon emissions, so I would keep it in place until we can realistically replace its output with cleaner, safer options like wind and solar. The issue of nuclear waste storage is a difficult one, since the problem of disposing of radioactive waste safely has plagued us for decades, with few solutions. This is why I oppose expanding our current nuclear reactors, to prevent the creation of even more, while in the meantime we must keep the on-site storage as safe and secure as possible, with strict regulations and frequent inspections.

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?

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Environmental justice is a key plank of my climate plan. As governor, I will seriously implement the largely ignored recommendations from the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities and make sure stakeholders from front line and fence line communities historically affected by pollution and environmental injustice have a role in decision-making. Just like when I was U.S. Secretary of Education and the political appointees of my team were majority people of color, which reflected the diversity of our students across the country, I am committed to having a team as Governor that reflects the diversity of our state. As I laid out in my plans for education, economic development, transportation, and housing, addressing the climate crisis will always be a top priority and lens through which my administration tackles issues. My appointees will reflect that and I will require that my team have not only a commitment to urgent action on climate and environmental justice but the expertise and training. For environmental related positions, experience and training in the fields they are regulating or policy areas they are developing will be required. I also hope to work with advocates like yourselves to ensure we are attracting and identifying the best people to fill these positions across state government.

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?

One of the most direct ways we can attack environmental injustice and protect our typically overlooked communities is allocating climate mitigation funds specifically to communities that have been disproportionately impacted by climate change. They bear some of the worst damages and highest risks of climate change, so our climate mitigation funding should reflect that. The State Climate Advisor within the Governor's Executive Council that I appoint will oversee this effort, with frequent input from our affected communities.

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?

Maryland is currently behind on our mandatory agricultural nitrogen reductions and set to miss meeting reductions for 2025. As governor, my administration will drastically reduce runoff of nitrogen and phosphorus to catch up with reduction targets. Reducing

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nutrient runoff from agriculture will require tightening regulation of farm operations around manure and chemical fertilizers, as well as new regulations to reduce poultry waste that flows into the Bay. We need to finally pass the Poultry Litter Management Act so corporate poultry producers clean up after themselves as well as reinstate the poultry pollution limits introduced by Governor O'Malley that were halted under Hogan. My administration will work in partnership with Maryland's farmers to advance sustainable agriculture practices. Just as my administration will update building codes to cut down on greenhouse gas production, it will update construction codes around run off as well. We will step up inspections and code enforcement of construction sites to further reduce runoff and prevent developers from cutting corners at the cost of our environment. As for campaign contributions, my campaign has not accepted donations from the Maryland poultry industry and we do not plan on taking any in the future.

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?

Absolutely. Evidence indicates that people living near poultry houses are more likely to be diagnosed with pneumonia in Wicomico County, a top producer in Maryland, where adult ER visits for asthma are also double the state rate. 1 in 4 children in Wicomico county have been diagnosed with asthma, and Somerset County has a lifetime asthma rate of 21.2%, significantly higher than the state rate of 12.9%. There are obviously health effects from the poultry farms and we need to monitor ammonia as part of the permitting process for concentrated animal feed operations. Inexpensive methods to mitigate ammonia emissions like planting trees or tall grasses by escape fans are already used by many farms and the Maryland Department of Environment could easily require mitigation practices.

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?

As governor, I support further limiting the use of single-use plastic products, including a statewide plastic bag ban. We have already seen plastic bag fees and bans successfully reduce the plastic bags in our waterways and landfills. The European

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Union is aggressively cracking down on plastic waste and it's led to boosted investment toward circular solutions. We should ban single-use plastic bags in Maryland like the states of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon and Vermont. On the consumer side, we can implement bottle-return programs in Maryland like other states have implemented and have since seen higher recycling rates. Long term, I will shift Maryland's waste disposal policies to put more weight on producers, forcing them to take responsibility for the waste they create, so that they are forced to develop more sustainable packaging or take-back programs and taxpayers are not stuck paying for the clean up of plastic waste.

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?

Yes. I will revive the Red Line project as governor, as it was proposed. This means the Red Line rail going across Baltimore, and not a watered-down version that is intermodal or partially completed with bus routes. To help with lost economic development from the Red Line's cancellation, my administration will help historically disadvantaged communities by establishing a state bank that will help borrowers who cannot get loans through traditional lenders access to capital and reform Maryland's procurement process to expand opportunity for Maryland's small businesses - particularly those owned by people of color - to participate in state business.

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?

No. I think the Capital Beltway and I-270 project sends too much state money to private corporations, will not reduce traffic congestion long-term, and most importantly is irresponsible to pursue in the face of climate change and needed investment in public transit infrastructure. While I recognize there may be legal obligations to the project after taking office, I will vote against approving further contracts and spending for it on the Board of Public Works.

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

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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?

We already have a clear picture of what level of investment we need in public transit here in Maryland. The best way to rebuild ridership is ensuring efficient, frequent, convenient, and reliable service. Urgent priorities include building the Red Line, finishing the Purple Line, expanding MARC west, increasing MARC frequency, building the Southern Maryland light rail project, and dramatically improving and expanding bus service (using electric buses) including transit-friendly street design.

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?

On top of immediately starting construction on the Red Line, to help with lost economic development from its cancellation my administration will help historically disadvantaged communities by establishing a state bank that will help borrowers who cannot get loans through traditional lenders access to capital and reform Maryland's procurement process to expand opportunity for Maryland's small businesses - particularly businesses owned by people of color - to participate in state business. My state government will invest in businesses located along the proposed Red Line corridor to help them get off the ground and work with the Baltimore City government to create incentives for mixed-use development and locally-owned, proposed businesses along the Red Line route.

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?

I will ensure in my budget proposals as governor that the Maryland Historical Trust is fully funded so it can carry out its mission of protecting our historic sites and will have access to the most advanced climate mitigation measures available.

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