



QUESTIONS FROM GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE CLIMATE FORUMS

Answer Submission from the Tom Perez for Maryland Campaign

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?**

I know that climate change is *the* urgent threat facing our planet and placing our future at risk. It imperils our children and our grandchildren's future, and disproportionately affects our most vulnerable communities. As Governor, I will work to make Maryland the leader in combating climate change and investing in a 21st century green economy on the Eastern seaboard. Serving as President Obama's Secretary of Labor and the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, I have led organizations and government agencies through crises with urgency and accountability. I will bring this experience and urgency to addressing our state's climate crisis as the next Governor of Maryland.

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

Yes. Last year, I believe I was the first candidate to [call for the creation](#) of a cabinet-level Climate & Resilience Coordinator who reports directly to the Governor and coordinates all state agencies to look for vulnerabilities in Maryland's current approach to climate and opportunities for investment in the energy economy across the state.

- 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?**

As Governor, I am committed to working with the General Assembly to mandate Maryland's electrical production be 100 percent carbon-free by 2035, with an interim goal of 80 percent by 2030. I will also embrace President Biden's national commitment to cutting greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 in Maryland. Part of this transition to renewable energy must mean

that state government is leading by example to invest in environmentally friendly schools, libraries, hospitals, and other state facilities.

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

Climate equity is a central part of my environmental plan. We can only progress as a state and take on the existential threat of climate change when we all work together and no communities are left behind. This means maximizing federal funds to help homes new and old become energy efficient. It also means increasing capacity for solar energy through expanded solar tax credits for low and moderate income residents and increasing economic incentives and liability protections for solar expansion into existing brownfields and unproductive urban space. We also must ensure that all families have the opportunity to transition to electric vehicles by providing price incentives and investment in more charging infrastructure for both cars and bikes, especially in low-income neighborhoods.

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?

The Calvert Cliffs plant is federally licensed until 2035, meaning that it will remain a part of our state's energy portfolio years past the next Governor's term regardless of their position on nuclear power. I will work to ensure that our renewable portfolio is robust well before this license expires. I will also work with federal leaders to ensure that they have a plan to safely and securely store nuclear waste in a way that does not endanger our communities.

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?

I have had the privilege of leading a number of state and federal agencies, culminating with my position as Secretary of Labor under President Obama. A major key to success was building competent, diverse leadership teams. The commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion has and will continue to be a staple of my leadership. I am committed to ensuring that every aspect of my administration reflects the diversity of our state. I will work directly with environmental justice advocates as well as impacted communities when developing environmental policy from day one. Environmental justice advocates from across the state will be instrumental in my administration as both leadership and as advisors.

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?

Maryland is home to more than 3,000 miles of coastline, meaning many of our communities are already feeling the impacts of our rising tides and warming climate. My administration will prioritize climate change equity by protecting our most vulnerable communities who are most affected by climbing temperatures, floods, and extreme weather caused by climate change. This will mean replicating the successful model of stormwater management in Prince George's County to other parts of the state, investing in cooling infrastructure in our dense urban centers, especially Baltimore and in schools, and protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay through coastal restoration programs. These efforts will cut across agencies, from public health, to education, and environment, which is why they must be overseen by our state's highest office, the Governor's Office. My administration's Climate & Resilience Coordinator will execute climate change mitigation projects with direct input from impacted communities and equity at the forefront.

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?

As Governor, I will work with the agricultural community and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that we engage in sustainable agricultural practices. I believe that Maryland can become a vegetable basket of the MidAtlantic, and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices can enable us to have a thriving agricultural industry and reduce pollution in the Bay. I ensure that Maryland remains a leader on restoration, while recognizing we have much more to do. Working with state and federal agencies, we will step up our efforts to expand forest buffers and wetlands. We will continue to make strides in agriculture, and we will work with EPA and USDA to ensure that our neighbors do their part to control agricultural runoff into the Susquehanna, which feeds directly to the Bay, and I support state and federal efforts to target funding into those places upstream where sustainable agriculture will make the most difference. I will replicate the successful model of stormwater management in Prince George's County by developing public-private partnerships that enhance Maryland's ability to capture and filter stormwater through as much green infrastructure as possible to reduce pollution load in local streams.

In order for this to be successful, we must ensure appropriate staffing levels at the Maryland Department of the Environment, Natural Resource, and Agriculture to be able to complete the inspections necessary and enforce policy in order to deter future violations.

I will not accept money from the poultry industry.

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?

Yes. All of my policies, including my environmental policy, will be data-driven and outcome-oriented. In order to ensure that my approach is rooted in the best available evidence, we need to collect data on our worst sources of pollution in the state, including poultry plants and their impact on air quality.

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?

Reducing our reliance on plastics is crucial to preserving our natural resources and our aquatic life. As Governor, I will support legislation allowing local jurisdictions to place restrictions on plastic bags and bag use fees for other non-reusable bags. It is also crucial that we hold plastics manufacturers accountable for the damage that their products cause to our environment. I will hold these manufacturers accountable and encourage a transition to more sustainable packaging options by implementing a fee on single-use plastics that gets increasingly higher the less sustainable the manufacturers' products are. These funds will then be used to help counties ensure that waste is not entering our waterways and ecosystems.

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?

Resurrecting the Red Line will be a key priority. Baltimoreans have waited too long for an affordable, reliable, and comprehensive transportation system. I am committed to reinvesting in the development of an East-West rapid transit line in Baltimore by doing a new EIS, securing a new right of way, and rebuilding support for the project. I will also facilitate the development of a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority to ensure Baltimoreans have a voice in deciding what their transportation infrastructure should look like.

In addition to providing a better future for transportation in Baltimore, we must make up for the opportunities that the current administration has robbed of Baltimoreans. As Governor, I will invest in growing the economy in Baltimore and growing the number of good, family-supporting union jobs that don't require a college degree in Baltimore. This means increasing the capacity of the Baltimore Port and becoming the premier green port on the eastern seaboard. This means working directly with emerging businesses in Baltimore and across the state to ensure that they have the capital, talent, and resources to thrive and creating an ecosystem that

empowers Maryland businesses. And this means developing new apprenticeship opportunities that create a pipeline for Baltimoreans to find stable, gainful employment opportunities. The Governor also killed a redevelopment project at State Center, and I will work with community stakeholders to revive this project.

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?

I do not support the current proposal of this project. We should not widen the beltway; nor is it necessary to install "Lexus" lanes on I-270. As Governor, I will seek to do the following: (1) replace the American Legion Bridge; (2) expand HOV lines to the I-270 spur; (3) utilize reversible lanes on I-270; and (4) widen I-270 from Clarksburg into Frederick. In addition, I would dramatically improve MARC service.

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?

I know that effective transportation systems must be implemented in coordination with local, state, and federal government. Despite federal support for projects such as the Red Line and Purple Line, Marylanders have been left without a partner in Annapolis. Whether through Build Back Better funding, COVID funding, or other ongoing sources, I will leverage every federal dollar available to funnel resources into our most underserved communities.

I will also seek to replicate the model of Maryland's Local Management Boards (known in some counties as collaboration councils), which "braid and blend" public and private funding sources to address the needs of our communities. This is a potentially powerful approach to addressing other complex issues with locally-tailored solutions.

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?

See question 11.

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?

Because of their proximity to water, many of Maryland's historic sites are particularly vulnerable to the effects of rising sea levels. We must invest in protecting these important historical sites. As governor, we will consider cultural heritage while developing climate policy and incorporate practices for conserving and adapting culturally significant sites, including the funding to rebuild and relocate these important pieces of our history and cultural heritage.

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?

See question 3.