

RESPONSES to Environmental Forum:

What experience, values and skills will you bring to the responsibility of combatting the climate crisis as a state legislator? Where do you feel you would be most effective?

I will bring my

- **extensive experience in environmental advocacy;**
- **demonstrated effectiveness in the getting things done through the legislative process;**
- **my years of experience in delivering excellent constituent services,**
- **demonstrated commitment to working inclusively with stakeholders, and**
- **Will continue to provide good communication and transparency as your next state representative.**

As an advocate:

Sierra Club: endangered species act and water law

Container Recycling Institute: tracked bottle bill legislation throughout the country

National Wildlife Federation: lobbied the Senate for successful passage of Senator Kerry's Flood Insurance Reform Act

As a City Councilor I co-sponsored the **Tree Preservation Ordinance** with Mike Lipof to protect our trees from development, was an early supporter of the **Community Preservation Act**, advocated to **preserve and acquire open space, supported the plastic bag ban and leaf blower ordinances.**

As a private citizen, I created a foundation that has provided grant funding to environmental and cultural organizations in and around Newton - projects including Newton Conservators - **Ordway Park Project**, Newton Conservation Commission and the Charles River Watershed Association - **Marty Sender Path, Green Decade's Solar Energy Project**, the Newton Conservation Commission's **Environmental Science Program**, funded a **study to improve water circulation at Purgatory Cove** and a **cost estimate for creating bike and pedestrian paths along the Charles River**. I've advocated with NPS to participate in **food rescue programs** and I am currently working with tree advocates to continue to **protect Newton's Trees** and public health care advocates on **banning PFAS products.**

It is clear that we need to take bold and aggressive action to combat the climate crisis and we'll need a fierce, passionate, and effective advocate at the Statehouse with a proven record of commitment to the environment, I pledge to be a leader on all things Green

What should be done about the gas distribution system?

Safely stop wasteful spending on the old system. Facilitate transition off of gas. Gas companies are replacing and installing new gas lines - spending millions of rate payer dollars on infrastructure that will become obsolete in the near future resulting in stranded assets that ratepayers and taxpayers will be paying for over many decades.

Newton Energy Commissioners reviewed National Grid's Gas System Enhancement program - which is intended to replace leak-prone pipes and reduce significant gas leak but what they found was nearly all of the expenditures from the program in Newton are for replacing pipes. They found that gas leak repair is much more cost-effective short term for reducing gas leaks than replacing leak-prone pipes

DPU issued an order on the Future of Gas at the end of last year, recognizing the harmful effects of methane, and affirming that the Commonwealth must and will transition the building sector off of gas and that the dominant strategy is through electrification.

- **Rejected renewable natural gas and hydrogen - too risky**
- **Called for minimizing additional investments in pipeline and distribution mains**
- **Said no need for sprawling gas system for back up heat**
- **Called on utilities to minimize stranded assets**
- **Gas utilities would have to demonstrate that non gas pipeline assets were adequately considered and found to be non-viable or cost prohibitive in order to receive full cost recovery**

1, Safely stop wasteful spending on the old system.

- a. Give DPU the authority to prohibit expansion of the system into new territories and prohibit the Siting Board from permitting large expansions of existing gas systems.**
- b. Require gas companies to develop, implement and update annually plans to decommission their system safely, quickly, and equitably.** Ratepayers must not be forced to pay for both an expanded electric grid and an expansion of a polluting gas pipeline system that will soon be obsolete.
- c. Prevent gas companies from charging rate payers for depreciation on the gas system after 2050.**
- d. Require gas companies during the transition to repair where feasible leaky gas pipes rather than replace them and save ratepayers billions of dollars.**

2. Facilitate the Transition off of Gas

- a. Change gas companies legal obligation to serve gas customers within their existing territories by adding the option to provide customers with heat via renewable non-polluting energy and expediting neighborhood transition.**
- b. Incentivize networked geothermal infrastructure** - the most efficient heating and cooling system known - as one way to end dependence on volatile and polluting fossil fuels. Geothermal energy minimizes stress on the electric power grid, which will save money for both ratepayers and taxpayers as demand for electricity soars. **Framingham is piloting a project with Eversource and Lowell is partnering with National Grid.**
- c. Expand Mass Save's services to help customers of all income levels** upgrade wiring, insulate their homes, and switch to efficient electric heat pumps of all types which will save ratepayers money while reducing emissions.
- d. Apply the state's prevailing wage law to energy construction and infrastructure projects and establish a Just Transition Office and Advisory Commission.**

As a State Representative, what can you do to help communities meet the Commonwealth's emissions reduction goals in the building and transportation sectors?

Sustainable Development:

30% of greenhouse gas emissions come from existing buildings.

- 1. Encourage retrofits through incentives and through the support of a green bank to provide funding for energy efficiency improvements for underserved communities.**
- 2. Ban new fossil fuel hookups in all new construction, and increase incentives for clean energy upgrades in existing buildings. - The Electrification Ordinance just passed the City Council on Monday. I will support a statewide Electrification Ordinance.**
- 3. Require emission reporting from existing buildings and set targets for reduction of their greenhouse gas emissions. I spoke in support of a Newton BERDO a few weeks ago and asked that it include residential properties. I will support a statewide BERDO program.**

Sustainable Transportation

40% comes from the transportation sector.

- 1. Increase investments to upgrade and expand our public transportation system, and electrify our rail and buses including school buses.**
- 2. Create safe and accessible alternative means of travel - including bike lanes, pedestrian paths, and trails.**
- 3. Assist communities with electric car charging stations.**

Lack of transparency in the House makes it very hard for advocates to hold their legislators accountable. Do you support the bills proposing changes such as posting committee votes on the legislature's website within 48 hours of a vote, and that hearings be scheduled two weeks in advance so advocates can plan for meaningful participation in the legislative hearings? Why or why not?

I support bills proposing changes such as posting committee votes on the legislature's website within 48 hours of a vote and that hearings be scheduled two weeks in advance so advocates can plan for meaningful participation in legislative hearings.

As many of you know, transparency, accountability, and good communication is important to me. I believe it is essential for government, particularly elected officials, to provide information related to their work and votes that is easily accessible. In 2015 I began an e-newsletter to keep residents informed about what our city council, boards and commissions and school department were discussing and voting on and providing links to their committee reports. My colleagues believed it was a waste of my time because all of the information was on the city's website. But have any of you tried to navigate the city's website? I'm a data nerd with years of experience with city government, I can't always easily find the information.

That information has now been incorporated into Fig City News which I co-founded with Bruce Henderson and that continues to provide information on your local government and provides committee reports.

That being said, posting of the committee votes alone should not be the only information to hold your electeds accountable. It is so important that there be committee reports so voters can understand why their electeds took whatever positions they did. Voting in committee is not the end all be all. Like with everything, their decisions to support or vote against or even abstained may be nuanced.

By scheduling hearings in advance, it gives advocates enough time to assemble data and information necessary to present and puts everyone on an equal footing.

That being said, there will be exceptions - emergency hearings when it may not be logistically possible to give that advance notice.

It is clear that we need to take bold and aggressive action to combat the climate crisis. I will bring my extensive experience in environmental advocacy, proven effectiveness in getting things done through the legislative process, my years of experience in delivering excellent constituent services, demonstrated commitment to working inclusively with stakeholders, and continue to provide good communication and transparency as your next state representative. Most of all, I pledge to be your partner and champion on all things green.

I ask for your vote on September 3 and again on November 5th.