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ConserveLand

A Publication by the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association



SPECIAL ELECTION EDITION

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association solicited responses from the Gubernatorial and U.S. Senatorial Candidates regarding conservation issues. To read the entire collection of questions and answers, please visit conserve-land.org.

The Gubernatorial Candidates on Conservation



Edward Rendell (D)
www.rendellforgovernor.com



Lynn Swann (R)
www.swannforgovernor.com

How would land conservation issues be addressed in your administration?

RENDELL: My record on land conservation speaks for itself: I have championed historic investments in protecting our open space, farmland and forests, and as a result we are now investing tens of millions of additional dollars in preserving undeveloped land. For example, I have already committed more than \$25 million of Growing Greener 2 proceeds to preserve 13,200 acres of open space – and we will reach 75,000 acres preserved since 2003 by the time this fiscal year is over. In addition, under my leadership, 2006 will be the largest year ever for our farmland preservation program – which already leads the nation.

SWANN: The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must rejuvenate its award-winning land recycling program by harmonizing standards across the state into a coherent, consistent program. It must rapidly restore funding for the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act, which will otherwise go bankrupt, leaving the state's primary emergency response fund empty. I will also create a seat at the table for representatives affected by state environmental policy. Too often policies originating in Harrisburg have ignored the concerns of those most affected by them. Strategies for achieving all environmental goals involve addressing funding priorities and making state government consistent and responsive to citizens closest to the areas of concern.

***Election Day is
November 7th
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conserve-land.org***

The Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund has been a tremendous asset to Pennsylvania communities since 1993. How do you view the future of this community investment program?

RENDELL: The Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund provides significant benefits to Pennsylvania. That is why I have preserved the use of the realty transfer tax for this purpose and allocated a portion of the \$625 million Growing Greener 2 environmental initiative to further many of the Keystone Fund's goals. In fact, nearly \$1 out of every \$5 of Growing Greener 2 funds that I have released to date have been invested in community park, recreation, state park and state forest improvement projects. Since I took office, we have inaugurated the 117th state park, added 22,000 acres of State Forest land, and developed or improved more than 150 community hiking and biking trails. We must continue to invest in upgrading community park and recreation facilities, protecting natural areas, and building recreational trails.

SWANN: A few months ago I had the privilege to ride with a group of cyclists from Valley Forge to the Philadelphia Art Museum. The 22-mile ride was almost exclusively on a rails to trail path. It was a wonderful ride with great sites and a smooth path. I fully understand and appreciate the importance of these types of projects and initiatives across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I will continue to support Key 93. Key 93 will also needs additional resources and I stand ready to ensure that Pennsylvania continues it healthy investment in recreational trails, community parks, and recreation facilities.

Growing Greener has thrived despite changes in administrations over the last six years; what would the future of Growing Greener be under your administration?

RENDELL: I proposed Growing Greener 2 as the largest environmental investment in Pennsylvania history, and I am proud that voters approved the \$625 million bond initiative last year. Already, well over \$200 million of Growing Greener 2 funds are at work preserving land, protecting our drinking water, creating new opportunities for recreation, and making other needed improvements in the quality of life of Pennsylvania residents. If re-elected, I look forward to overseeing the deployment of the remaining Growing Greener 2 resources and to ensuring that the Commonwealth has adequate resources over the long term to continue improving our environment.

SWANN: Growing Greener has been a strong program. Nevertheless, these funds will not be around for too many years without some structural changes or additional dollars. I would continue to support Growing Greener and in fact have developed a very aggressive environmental clean up schedule. Through Growing Greener and other funds I will pursue the following goals by 2010. They include preserving 50,000 new acres of farmland, restoring 1,000 more miles of impaired streams, plugging 1,000 additional spent oil and gas wells, preserving 25,000 new acres of "greenspace," reusing 2,500 new acres of brownfields and reclaiming 2,500 additional acres of mined territory.

The Pennsylvania House passed HB1875 in a 182-0 vote on 5/1/2006. The joint resolution proposes amending the constitution to enable the General Assembly to establish tax credits for conserving forest, agricultural and open space lands. How do you view a state conservation tax credit for Pennsylvania?

RENDELL: I share the goals of the House resolution, and I believe that we must do all that we can to preserve our rich heritage of farmland, open space and forests. I believe that grant programs are often more effective than tax credits and better able to target limited taxpayer resources to achieve the maximum impact. As Governor, I have championed state funding for these purposes, and I specifically proposed Growing Greener 2 so that Pennsylvania could make essential environmental investments. By the end of this fiscal year, we will have preserved 75,000 acres of open space during my Administration, and we have already preserved 85,000 acres of farmland since I took office – together making up an area nearly one and a half times the size of Delaware County. I will continue to ensure that there are resources available to invest in the preservation of our irreplaceable natural resources, and I remain willing to use any approach that is fiscally responsible and that maximizes the efficiency of our taxpayer funds to achieve our shared goals.

SWANN: I would support a conservation tax credit in Pennsylvania. Conserving forest, agricultural, and open space is a vital part of my environmental and agricultural policy proposals. I would caution your readers, however. Approximately two years ago, Governor Rendell's counsel penned a memo stating that tax credits of any kind are likely unconstitutional in Pennsylvania. Hence, regardless of the Governor's stated position on this survey, I believe it is vital that your readers weigh that against his internal memo outlining his legal position. ☐

Read the entire Q&A at conserveland.org.

The Senatorial Candidates on Conservation



Bob Casey (D)
www.bobcasey.com



Rick Santorum (R)
www.ricksantorum.com

U.S. farm policy directs billions of taxpayer dollars each year to farm subsidies – much of which goes to big growers in a handful of midwestern states – with little going to secure productive farmland and food supplies close to population centers and to encourage farming practices that protect wildlife and water quality. How will you work to make the 2007 Farm Bill and future farm bills better meet Pennsylvania and America's food security and conservation needs?

SANTORUM: I agree that future farm bills must better meet the needs of Pennsylvania. I also agree that it is time to change the course and focus of our farm programs. Instead of placing the emphasis on production programs for a few crops, our farm programs should benefit all of U.S. agriculture. I am well positioned to influence agriculture policy as Pennsylvania's only Senate Agriculture Committee member in over 100 years. I also have a record of success. I authored the Farmland and Ranchland Protection Program and I advanced reforms of current farm bill programs. Instead of market intrusive and trade distorting production oriented farm programs, we should look to support agriculture with revenue assurance programs and we should give states the ability to tailor farm bill funds to their specific needs. This would allow for consideration of more factors, including conservation and preservation of our land and water resources.

CASEY: As a U.S. Senator, I will be committed to fighting for rural Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania's farmers and farm economy. Part of this is ensuring adequate funding for conservation programs. The best way to strengthen the rural economy is to support and rebuild the family farm system. We have lost too many family farms to rising costs, low prices, and factory farm consolidation. A federal farm policy and trade policy that supports farm income is essential to supporting family farmers. The federal government should also encourage value-added agriculture and other ways to increase farm income.

The current leadership in Washington has failed to adequately fund the Farm Bill. As a U.S. Senator, I will fight to ensure that these important programs are properly funded. The 2002 Farm Bill made substantial improvements over the previous "freedom to fail" legislation. With the current Farm Bill set to expire next year, I will work to ensure that the new bill is fair to Pennsylvania farmers and that it strengthens farm income. The current leadership in Washington continues to propose unwise budget cuts to agriculture programs. These cuts are unfair to farmers already struggling to get by and compete in the international marketplace. I will fight to ensure farm programs have adequate funding.

Congress established the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in 1964 to create parks and open spaces, conserve wetlands and wildlife habitat, and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for Americans. Do you support fully funding LWCF including an annual appropriation of \$450M for state matching grants?

SANTORUM: I support fully funding the LWCF through the annual appropriations process, and I have been a long-time supporter of the state-side program because it supports a valuable partnership with the states that conserves precious lands and funds recreation in our own communities.

CASEY: I would support fully-funding the LWCF and I oppose efforts by the Bush Administration to eliminate funding for the program. This program provides states with vital funding for conserve open spaces, parks, and other habitat to have a great positive impact both the environment and quality of life.

In what other ways will you work to help Pennsylvanians protect the wildlife habitat, waterways, productive farms and forests, and other open spaces important to the long term environmental, economic and social health of Pennsylvania's communities?

SANTORUM: As the author of the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) through which Pennsylvania has received \$22 million to protect more than 36,000 acres, I am particularly interested in the viability of the program. When the federal government recently proposed burdensome regulations for the FRPP program, I responded with legislation (S.3720). Instead of applying directly to USDA for each conservation easement, my legislation

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LAND TRUST
ASSOCIATION

www.conserveland.org

105 Locust Street, Suite 300
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1453

ConserveLand Editor, Nicole Faraguna
nfaraguna@conserveland.org

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Candidates Express Views
on Conservation***

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would allow qualified state, local and private organization to enter into a one time per year grant agreement with USDA, thereby avoiding the federal government's new and burdensome requirements. I hope to enact this legislation in the 2007 Farm Bill. I believe that development should be responsible and open space preserved for the betterment of our communities. I have supported numerous pieces of legislation and have advocated for increased funding for effective conservation programs that benefit Pennsylvanians including the Highlands Conservation Act, the Suburban and Community Forestry and Open Space Program, tax incentives for brownfield remediation, and funding for the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

CASEY: One major issue that impacts all of these areas is also an area where Rick Santorum has a drastically different opinion that I do. I think we must act now to address the problem of global warming and to slow, stop, and reduce global warming pollution. My opponent is one of the few people who does not think global warming exists.

The science is telling us that we must slow, stop, and reverse the emission of global warming pollution. Our policies should follow the science. From sea to shining sea, we are a country that has been blessed with incredible natural beauty and resources. And it should be America that takes the lead in fighting global warming. We can no longer continue along the policy path of indifference and inaction.

Instead, we should immediately begin to implement policy based on four principles to slow, stop, and reverse global warming pollution.

1. Mandatory reductions in carbon emissions.
2. Energy efficiency to reduce the demand for energy.
3. Increased fuel efficiency standards to reduce global warming pollution and to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.
4. Major Investments in alternative and renewable energy sources that will make us less dependent on foreign oil and create manufacturing jobs in the U.S. ☐

Please review all the candidates' responses online at conserveland.org.