



**Candidate Name:**  
**Legislative District:**

**Thank you for taking the time to fill out the Conservation Voters New Mexico Action Fund legislative candidate questionnaire. Your answers to this questionnaire will be considered in conjunction with your background, your past voting record (where applicable), the viability of your campaign, and the conservation record of your opponent. These factors will be considered by CVNM staff and form the basis of a final decision by the CVNM board to either endorse a candidate in a race or stay neutral.**

**It is important to understand that these questions are primarily informational for CVNM staff and board to understand your approach to conservation policy. No answer you give will be automatically disqualifying, and there is no maximum word count. Please take the space and time you need to fully explain your thoughts and positions. Elaborating your thought process and reasoning on environmental issues is critically important for CVNM staff and board to understand the values that inform positions that you take on these issues.**

**Background:**

**1. Please attach a copy of your resume or CV to your reply email. If you do not have one, please describe your current occupation and other employment experience relevant to both the state legislative campaign and the position of State Representative, including any previously held elected offices.**

**2. What experience do you have with conservation or environmental justice issues? What, if any, specific environmental accomplishments are you most proud of?**

**3. Are there any anti-conservation votes or positions in your past that you wish to explain?**

**4. Please list the core staff, supporters, and fundraisers working on behalf of your campaign, and describe their areas of expertise.**

**5. Have you been endorsed by other groups this election cycle? If so, who? Please include names of contacts with those endorsing organizations.**

## Issues:

### 1) Social Justice

In New Mexico, much of the adverse environmental and health effects of mining, drilling, and waste disposal activities have disproportionately fallen on communities of color (Hispanic, Latino and Native Communities in particular). As a legislator you'll be called on not to just craft and vote on policy addressing this issue, but also to oversee coalition processes that will result in the formation of bills to do the same. What are some policy solutions to this issue? What are some of the ways you'll work to engage impacted communities in your district in the formation and development of legislation?

New Mexico has no state law requiring that state funded or permitted projects conduct environmental impact analysis or scoping prior to approval. The federal government has this requirement in the form of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires that government agencies "look before they leap" in order to prevent easily avoidable environmental harms. In the 2019 session, a bill - Environmental Review Act (2019 HB 206 – Chasey/Stewart)- was introduced that would have created this type of protection. Would you support this type of bill? What sort of role do you think that local communities in New Mexico have in the development of projects that may have an environmental impact?

### 2) Uranium mining

The greatest health impacts (and consequent need for cleanup) from legacy uranium contamination are in indigenous and Hispanic/Latino communities, where massive sites like the Homestake and Jackpile Mines still pose serious health risks to adjacent communities. These communities have experienced political and industry resistance to measures as simple as conducting a baseline health study in order to assess the health impacts of these sites. One of the most critical elements of this is groundwater and aquifer contamination. If elected, what measures would you take to identify the impacts of this legacy pollution? What other solutions would you explore to address this issue?

### 3) Radioactive waste disposal

There is currently a plan to develop an interim storage facility for high level commercial radioactive waste in the Southeastern part of the state. Southern New Mexico is also currently home to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) and the Urenco USA Nuclear Facility. How do you feel about the storage or disposal of radioactive waste as a long-term economic growth option for New Mexico?

#### **4) Nuclear power**

Do you view nuclear power as a relatively “clean,” carbon-free energy source that can help reduce global climate change? Please briefly explain your answer.

#### **5) Pre-emption**

Several counties and municipalities across New Mexico have passed ordinances and rules providing guidelines and restrictions on oil and gas development activities, such as hydraulic fracturing or “fracking,” within their borders. These restrictions include things such as limiting the proximity of wellheads and schools, or restrictions on wastewater disposal to protect local groundwater resources. Do you support this practice?

#### **6) Tax Credits**

In 2020 Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed the solar tax credit back in to law, as the law had been allowed to expire without reauthorization in 2016. Do you support the practice of using the tax code to incentivize climate action?

In 2020 a bill to create a tax credit for electric vehicles (HB 207/SB 2) narrowly failed to pass the legislature. What is your stance on incentivizing the purchase of electric vehicles? What role do you think that battery electric vehicles have to play in New Mexico?

#### **7) Energy Transition**

The 2019 Energy Transition Act charted a new course for New Mexico, requiring that the state generate 100% of its electricity from carbon free sources by 2045. Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM), the state’s largest utility, has already begun the process of developing a resource plan to move us to this standard. Early proposals have contemplated the inclusion of natural gas in these plans as a bridge resource. What role do you think that natural gas should play in New Mexico’s energy generation portfolio?

This ambitious new renewable energy mandate has made New Mexico a model for other states in addressing climate change. A visionary part of this legislation includes the proactive approach that it takes towards planning and mitigating the impacts in the local community around the San Juan Generating station. How will you use your position as an elected official to ensure that our utilities and co-ops meet their clean energy targets? What will you look for as key indicators of a successful and equitable transition for the communities impacted by the closure of the plant?

## **8) Oil and Gas Policy**

Currently a significant percentage of the state's revenue comes from severance tax and royalties on oil and gas production. How would you ensure that state revenues don't suffer when the price of oil and gas is low?

New Mexico has a problem with natural gas waste. NASA found the most concentrated methane cloud in the U.S. (methane is the main component of natural gas, and a potent greenhouse gas) hovering over the San Juan Basin. More than \$100 million-worth of natural gas and millions more in state revenue is lost through venting, flaring, and leaks from oil and gas operations on New Mexico's federal and tribal lands alone each year. This waste deprives the state of critical royalty and severance tax revenue that could be invested in education and help close our budget gap. If captured, it would also be enough natural gas to heat every home in Albuquerque, Las Cruces and Santa Fe for a year. The Trump administration has already rolled back federal methane standards, but the Lujan Grisham administration has been working to develop a statewide rule to prevent waste, which should be finalized later in 2020. Would you support legislation strengthening the enforcement of this rule?

## **9) Public Land Access**

In 2015, Governor Martinez signed in to law a bill that restricts access to public waters on private property via a "designation of non-navigability". This law runs counter to the letter and spirit of the constitution of New Mexico, which establishes that the public has the right to use water in stream for recreational purposes. If elected, will you support legislation overturning this stream access limitation?

## **10) Clean Water**

The New Mexico Environment Department sued the United States Air Force in March 2019 over the failure of the Air Force to clean up contamination at Cannon and Holloman air bases of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (known as PFAS), which are highly carcinogenic. The process of holding the Air Force accountable for this may take many years and may require legislation, as well as consistent and reliable funding for the Environment Department for the pendency of the litigation. As a legislator, you will be called on to help shape the state's budget, including designating sufficient resources to our environmental regulators so they can protect us from exposure to pollutants like PFAS. Will you take necessary steps to support our environmental regulators in the vigorous exercise of their duties to protect New Mexicans water supplies?

## 11) Water Conservation

In 2005, the legislature established the Strategic Water Reserve (SWR) in order to help the state protect critical habitat for endangered species and to comply with interstate water agreements. This reserve has positive environmental effects by requiring that water remain in the stream of origin without impairment or depletion. Despite being one of the more effective tools for water conservation in the state, since 2014 the Legislature appropriated only \$2 million for the reserve. During the 2017 session, the Legislature eliminated and reallocated the balance of funding for the reserve. In the 2020 legislative session, legislators contributed Capital Outlay funds to the SWR as an interim measure. Would you support prioritizing appropriations to the Strategic Water Reserve?

New Mexico currently lacks a comprehensive statewide water plan. This has resulted in a litany of problems stemming from misconceptions about water flow and an incomplete picture of New Mexico's water needs. As a result of this, New Mexico finds itself in trouble in the courts (in the form of the *Texas v. New Mexico* litigation) and particularly vulnerable to climate change driven drought cycles. Stakeholder groups are currently convening to develop legislation to make New Mexico a more informed and sophisticated water manager. What key things will that legislation need to accomplish to earn your support?

## 12) Copper Mine Rule

The Copper Mine Rule, promulgated in 2013 with some of its key provisions authored by the mining industry, allows copper mines to pollute groundwater beneath wide areas of a copper mine in complete disregard of New Mexico water quality standards. Notably, this area covers nine square miles at the Freeport-McMoRan Tyrone Mine in Grant County. The Attorney General and several other parties have challenged the rule as contrary to the New Mexico Water Quality Act. The New Mexico Supreme Court recently voted to support to the rule and allow copper mines to exceed pollution standards. If elected, would you support legislation to overrule the Copper Mine Rule and ensure that all groundwater in New Mexico is protected for present and future use?

## 13) Global Climate Change

Do you agree that global climate change is the result of anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases, and that it presents a very serious problem to human civilization? Do you agree that action is needed to address the problem?

Do you support State regulations or legislation to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions? What other legislation or policies do you support to address climate change? How would you ensure that climate legislation also benefits low income or communities of color?

#### **14) Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery**

The Mexican Gray Wolf is the southernmost subspecies of gray wolf in North America, and the most endangered. Federal employees have shot and killed 20 wolves since reintroduction began in 1998, and an additional 22 wolves have died inadvertently as a result of capture operations.

The 2017 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan calls for growing wolf populations and reducing the numbers of wolves removed by the federal government, but does not impose any limits to restrict killings. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services program killed one wolf on March 23 and three more on March 28, 2020. According to a press release by the Center for Biological Diversity, this was authorized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on behalf of the livestock industry.

This does not reconcile with the goal of the recovery plan, which is for each of the gray wolf populations to average 320 over an eight-year period and achieve sufficient genetic diversity. Please describe your position on reintroduction of predators into their native habitat and how you would approach the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction program in New Mexico.

#### **15) Trapping**

Trapping on public lands is legal in New Mexico. Reporting requirements and bag limits exist for some species, but not for often-trapped unprotected furbearers like coyotes and skunks. Reporting is not verifiable and traps do not need to be marked or placed with warning signage.

The only requirement is a ½ mile setback from trailheads or picnic areas. Effective April 1, 2020, every person purchasing a Furbearer License will be required to take a department approved education course prior to setting any trap or snare in New Mexico, and/or prior to hunting furbearers in New Mexico. While this effort by New Mexico Department of Game & Fish is a good first step, it does not address collateral damage to threatened and endangered species, domestic animals, or risks to public safety.

Would you support legislation to ban trapping on public lands in New Mexico?

Would you support legislation to ban all leg-hold traps and snares with appropriate exceptions for animal damage control and research?