

Top 10 Environmental Questions to ask your MLA candidates

We've crafted 10 key environmental questions for you to ask your MLA candidates. These aren't just questions about the environment — they're about how your future MLA plans to tackle the rising cost of living, protect your health and build a better, more sustainable future for all of us.

1 What will you do to ensure the government replaces/revises the Environmental Trust Fund (ETF)?

WHY THIS MATTERS : The ETF supported many important environmental projects in New Brunswick. However, the ETF lost its dedicated revenue source after the New Brunswick Beverage Containers Act was repealed. Without a replacement, many environmental organizations won't be able to continue local environmental projects that provide jobs, protect community health and support local economies.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate commits ensuring the government works with environmental organizations to create a long-term plan for rejuvenating the ETF and establishing a new dedicated revenue stream.

2 How will you support and respect Indigenous-led conservation in New Brunswick?

WHY THIS MATTERS : The Wabanaki peoples, including the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey and Peskotomuhkati, have deep connections with the lands and waters in what is now known as New Brunswick. Their leadership is essential in addressing biodiversity loss and climate change. However, the government's relationship with Indigenous peoples needs to be repaired in order to make real progress.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate ensures that the government creates space for Indigenous voices, respects Indigenous knowledge, supports the establishment of Indigenous-protected and conserved areas, and invests in species-at-risk restoration and stewardship by Indigenous communities.

3 What will you do to ensure the government bans the use of herbicides like glyphosate on Crown land?

WHY THIS MATTERS : Glyphosate is widely used in New Brunswick forests, but it harms biodiversity and is opposed by many residents. Safer alternatives have been successful elsewhere. Public funds are used to pay for these spraying programs, costing taxpayers tens of millions annually.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate commits to ensuring the government bans the spraying of herbicides like glyphosate on Crown land as soon as possible.

4 How will you ensure the government monitors, protects and restores plant and wildlife species in N.B?

WHY THIS MATTERS : Biodiversity is essential for many human needs. However, species are disappearing at an alarming rate worldwide. Despite existing strategies and laws in New Brunswick, the government has failed to protect the province's plant and wildlife species. Stronger commitments and actions are needed to monitor, maintain and restore biodiversity in this province.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate commits to ensuring that the government commits funding to support biodiversity efforts, develops a new biodiversity strategy, complies with the federal Species at Risk Act, protects 30 per cent of New Brunswick's land and oceans by 2030 and takes action against invasive species.

5 How will you ensure that the government monitors, restores and protects the health of New Brunswick's freshwater systems?

WHY THIS MATTERS : Clean water is essential, but New Brunswick's water strategy has fallen short. Many of the strategy's actions remain undone, and some other promised actions have been watered down. Recent reports highlight ongoing water quality issues not addressed in the plan. Climate change also impacts water quality, yet this issue is not a focus of the current strategy.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate commits to funding water monitoring and restoration efforts, addressing water quality issues, monitoring new pollutants, collaborating with Indigenous communities and environmental organizations on the strategy and providing regular updates on the water strategy's progress.

6 Will you commit to passing legislation similar to Bill 19: An Act Respecting the Right to a Healthy Environment?

WHY THIS MATTERS : This legislation would give all New Brunswickers the right to a clean and healthy environment, ensuring the government protects these rights. Passing this legislation is crucial for ensuring the health and wellbeing of New Brunswick's environment and its residents.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate commits to voting in favour of passing legislation to ensure New Brunswickers have a right to a healthy environment.

7 What will you do to address the financial strain on New Brunswickers from rising energy bills?

WHY THIS MATTERS : Energy poverty is a growing issue, affecting 36 per cent of the population, especially low-income households, seniors and rural communities. With energy rates set to rise further, more residents will struggle to afford necessities like heating, cooling and electricity.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate commits to supporting targeted energy assistance programs, prioritizing energy efficiency upgrades, investing in cheaper renewable energy sources and advocating for regulatory reforms to prevent excessive rate hikes.

8 Will you support a complete ban on fracked gas in New Brunswick?

WHY THIS MATTERS : New Brunswick has a moratorium on fracking due to environmental and health concerns as well as a lack of public support. These concerns still exist, yet the provincial government has pitched the possibility of lifting the moratorium. A complete oil and gas exploration ban would protect New Brunswick's natural resources and help prevent future costs associated with environmental damage from climate change.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate commits to enacting legislation that bans fracked gas, such as LNG and shale gas, as soon as possible.

9 How will you work with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to protect the Bay of Fundy?

WHY THIS MATTERS : The Bay of Fundy is a vital ecosystem that supports local fisheries and tourism. However, it is threatened by climate change, pollution and other factors. Fisheries and Oceans Canada is developing a marine conservation network plan that includes Bay of Fundy waters. This plan aims to protect ecologically significant sites and the long-term health of the bay. The province needs to work with federal authorities to ensure the plan's success.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate commits to working with the federal government to ensure the selection and protection of ecologically significant sites.

10 What steps will you take to address health problems brought on by the climate crisis and unnecessary emissions, particularly heatwaves, wildfires and poor localized air quality?

WHY THIS MATTERS : The climate crisis is worsening health concerns by driving more extreme weather events, degrading air quality and increasing the frequency of heat-related illnesses. Wildfires further compromise air quality, while heat waves amplify community health hazards. In New Brunswick, diesel buses contribute to the problem, endangering our children's health. Switching to electric buses is a simple and effective way to safeguard their wellbeing and protect our environment.

IDEAL ANSWERS: The candidate commits to converting all diesel buses to electric. The candidate further commits to supporting policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while ensuring sufficient resources for homeowners to install cooling systems, such as heat pumps.