



PRESS RELEASE

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## Climate Change Questions & Answers for the Three 21<sup>st</sup> Congressional District Candidates

*Aaron Woolf and Matt Funicello answered the questionnaire, Elise Stefanik never responded despite numerous phone messages and email requests*

### **For more information:**

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Lake George – Protect the Adirondacks sent a questionnaire to each of the three candidates running for Congress in New York's 21<sup>st</sup> Congressional District, which includes the Adirondack Park and northern New York, about their positions on climate change issues. The questionnaire included seven questions and was sent to Elise Stefanik, the Republican Party candidate, Aaron Woolf, the Democratic Party candidate, and Matt Funicello, the Green Party candidate. The climate change questionnaire was sent to each campaign on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Woolf and Funicello submitted their answers, while the Stefanik campaign has been unresponsive despite repeated emails and phone calls.

These questions and answers are provided below and will be posted on various websites. Stefanik's answers will be posted promptly if she chooses to provide them. The questions and answers are below:

### ***1. Do you believe that climate change is real and is caused by human use of fossil fuels?***

**Stefanik:** No response.

**Woolf:** Yes. On climate change, the science is clear: our planet is warming significantly, human activity is a major driver of the process, and rising temperatures will lead to increasingly serious and widespread environmental consequences if we do not take action.

**Funicello:** Yes, I do. And while I feel there may well be many other reasons adding to this impending and continuing crisis, I am fully of the belief that taking action to reduce fossil fuel dependency and limit emissions only makes sense.

***2. Do you support new laws or regulations to reduce carbon emissions? If so, what will you do to help create new laws or regulations to reduce carbon emissions?***

**Stefanik:** No response.

**Woolf:** I agree that it is essential that we set ambitious goals for reduction of all pollutants that contribute to climate disruption. Nonetheless, carbon is only one of those elements. A holistic approach to addressing climate needs to take into account all the activities to contribute to the phenomenon. A proper action plan on climate also deserves an analysis of the costs of NOT addressing these concerns. I believe that by developing a plan that accounts for the need to protect the environment, conserve energy, and create jobs, we can both sustain our economy and improve our environment.

I will co-sponsor and vote for legislation that sets ambitious but attainable carbon pollution goals, while also recognizing that many businesses and farmers in the 21<sup>st</sup> district will be affected by such laws; we need legislation that provides the resources, practical and financial, to assist those who will be affected by the transition away from carbon-based energy production.

**Funicello:** Yes. But I also feel that new requirements and regulations should come with transitional allowances for industry so that we are not putting undue stress on our barely surviving manufacturers or creating unemployment.

***3. What is your position on the EPA's draft Clean Power Rule currently in public hearing?***

**Stefanik:** No response.

**Woolf:** While I support the goals of the proposed Clean Power Rule, I am concerned by any broad policy changes effected through the executive branch. Congress must take responsibility and vote to give the EPA direction in this matter.

The EPA has an important mandate to protect Americans from pollution and should be fully funded and supported in its mission by Congress. While I support the goals of the proposed Clean Power Rule, I am concerned by any broad policy changes effected through the Executive Branch. Congress must take responsibility and vote to give the EPA direction in this matter. I am particularly concerned about pollutants that cross state lines in the air and contaminate our Adirondack streams and rivers, where our tourism and agriculture economies depend on a clean environment. It is essential that we consider how we can transition to cleaner energy generation in a way that does not cause undue hardship on our economy.

**Funicello:** I have not yet taken a position on the CPR at this time.

***4. What is your position on the Keystone XL pipeline project?***

**Stefanik:** No response.

**Woolf:** I support the Keystone XL project because, in the short-term, continued fossil fuel use must be part of our overall energy needs. Especially with the recent dangers we have seen transporting of crude oil by rail car in and around our district, we need to explore methods to ensure safer transit options for crude oil. Nonetheless, I am concerned that the focus on pipelines distracts us from our long-term energy strategy. Profits must be directed towards developing renewable energy sources such as solar, biomass, and other renewable energy sources to help reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

**Funicello:** I am 100% against Keystone XL.

***5. What is your position on the expansion of crude oil processing at the Port of Albany and an increase in transportation by railroad through the Adirondacks of Bakken crude oil?***

**Stefanik:** No response.

**Woolf:** Several tragic accidents in America and Canada have shown that our current safety standards for transporting hazardous materials by rail, including crude oil, are woefully inadequate. The DOT must take immediate action to begin retiring the dangerous DOT-111A tanker cars, and establish operational protocols that reduce the risk of derailments.

**Funicello:** I am 100% against the Albany processing plant and against the bomb trains and against shipping this highly flammable crude here (even if we ban the DOT-111's).

***6. If elected on the House of Representatives, what will you do on the issue of climate change in your first year in office?***

**Stefanik:** No response.

**Woolf:** I will introduce legislation that increases investment in alternative fuels like biomass, which is used to great effect in the 21<sup>st</sup> district, especially at Ft. Drum. Our district has proven the viability and efficiency of clean power generation, and this promising area must not be ignored.

**Funicello:** If elected as the first Green ever in the U.S. House, it will give environmentalists a massive boost in national coverage for their issues. I would use that bully pulpit to advocate for an end to oil subsidies and for the Green Party's 100% sustainable and renewable by 2030 energy platform.

**7. Please add any other statement you would like to make about the issue of climate change.**

**Stefanik:** No response.

**Woolf:** Climate change is a global issue and affects every nation on earth. While America cannot reverse the effects of climate change alone, we can and should be a leader in renewable energy. We must not stand by and allow other nations to reap the economic benefits of early investment in the clean energy economy. America cannot act alone, and we cannot expect the world to act without our economic and political leadership.

**Funicello:** My friend Pete is a Green who cycles and walks and takes public transportation everywhere he goes. As a self-described "recovering Republican", Pete was asked by his brother (still very much a Republican and a climate science denier), "What if you people are wrong and temperatures are cyclical and this is all just hysteria?" Pete's answer, "What if I AM wrong? I'm in great shape. I save lots of money. I meet cool people on the bus and the train I would never meet otherwise. I read. I get fresh air when I ride or walk. What do I have to lose by leaving my car at home?" I believe that Pete's response to his brother is the one we should all give to those who are skeptical about climate change when thinking about our governmental behavior as well. What do we have to lose by crafting legislation that creates cleaner air, water and soil?

### **Protect the Adirondacks**

Protect the Adirondacks is a privately funded, IRS-approved not-for-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park in northern New York. PROTECT was formed through the merger of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and the Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks in 2009. PROTECT pursues its mission to protect the Adirondack Park and defend the public "forever wild" Forest Preserve through citizen advocacy, grassroots organizing, education, research, and legal action. PROTECT is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. PROTECT maintains an office in Lake George. For more information see [www.protectadks.org](http://www.protectadks.org).