



Our Earth Is Worth Fighting For

**To:** Interested parties  
**From:** Pete Maysmith, LCV SVP of Campaigns  
**Date:** October 29, 2021  
**Re:** Races we'll be watching Tuesday

Much of our progress on climate and clean energy has come from state and local leaders who have tackled the climate crisis head-on. As a result of their leadership, [1 in 3](#) people in this country now live in a place committed to 100% clean energy.

Under President Biden's leadership, Congress is on the cusp of passing the Build Back Better Act, the largest investment in clean energy jobs, environmental justice, and climate action in American history. As vital as passing Build Back Better is, we know these federal investments must be coupled with strong state and local action to reach our climate targets, [including cutting pollution in half by 2030](#). Moreover, state and local leaders will be crucial for implementing what Congress passes. Electing strong, pro-climate leaders at the state and local level is essential to meet this "code red" climate moment.

In 2021, a group of young, black, brown, latino, indigenous, asian, and middle eastern candidates have ensured climate action and environmental justice are front and center in their elections. **That's why League of Conservation Voters state affiliates invested \$4,173,000 in state and local elections across the country.**

These are the races we'll be watching Tuesday:

### **Virginia Governor and House of Delegates**

Long a bellwether, Virginia is one of two opportunities to elect a pro-Climate Governor and maintain a strong pro-environment majority in the legislature. These races are expected to be very close and in the last two weeks, the Terry for Virginia [campaign is using climate as one of its closing arguments](#).

In 2020, the General Assembly passed the Virginia Clean Economy Act, one of the strongest clean energy bills in the country committing the state to 100% clean electricity. Currently, Democrats control the House of Delegates 55 to 45. There are 13 seats where the margin was 5% or less in 2019 -- eight of those seats are currently held by Democrats, 5 by Republicans.

### **VALCV-PAC investment**

Virginia League of Conservation Voters-PAC (VALCV-PAC) invested \$2.4 million to help elect Terry McAuliffe and to protect Virginia's first ever conservation majority in the House of Delegates. VALCV-PAC has supported key allies, including New Virginia Majority and BlackPAC, to mobilize voters in important regions in the commonwealth.



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VALCV-PAC has also run their own communications program in several battleground House of Delegate races, centering climate issues in critical districts. Significant funds have also gone towards a [joint effort](#) between Terry for Virginia, Democrat Governors Association, and VALCV-PAC including a TV ad buy in the DC, Richmond and Media markets as well as a statewide digital buy.

### **New Jersey Governor and state houses**

Since his election in 2017, Governor Phil Murphy has been one of the strongest environmental champions in the country. He was the first governor to commit to 100% clean energy while campaigning, which he followed up with executive action once in office, and has put New Jersey on track to lead the nation in offshore wind development and achieve 50% clean energy by 2030. Gov. Murphy has also [passed landmark environmental justice legislation](#) and fought hard against fossil fuel infrastructure like the PennEast Pipeline that was [just cancelled last month](#).

### **New Jersey LCV VF investment**

New Jersey League of Conservation Voters Victory Fund invested a total of \$152,000 to reelect Gov. Murphy, legislative candidates in Legislative Districts 2, 8, and 16, and Mayor Steven Fulop in Jersey City to create a pro-environment majority in the State Assembly, hold the pro-environment majority in the State Senate, and build the bench of future leaders. New Jersey LCV VF ran a digital campaign focused solely on Gov. Murphy and engaging Black and Latinx voters. New Jersey LCV VF also ran targeted digital and mail programs in Legislative Districts 8 and 16, a digital-only program in LD 2, and a paid text program in Jersey City.

### **Boston Mayor**

A large field of progressive candidates entered the race for Boston Mayor after Marty Walsh ended his eight year tenure to serve as President Biden's Secretary of Labor. As a clear leader on climate and environmental justice, the Environmental League of Massachusetts Action Fund backed At-Large City Councilor Michelle Wu. She would be the first woman of color elected to lead Boston and second to lead the city behind current Mayor Kim Janey who was appointed after Walsh became Secretary of Labor. Wu has committed to citywide carbon neutrality by 2040 - 10 years before the state's own target.

### **ELM Action Fund IE PAC investment**

The Environmental League of Massachusetts Action Fund IE PAC supported Councilor Wu early in the primary and has continued that support in the general, spending over \$200,000 total. These funds went toward multiple rounds of mail to nearly 15,000 targeted voters and an extensive digital media campaign centering climate in the race including ads run on social, OTT/CTV and YouTube.

### **Clean energy recovery in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Lima Ohio**



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Ohio has three key city elections that will have a major impact on climate action in the state. Conservation Ohio is investing \$410,000 in digital, mail, and TV ads as well as unique voter turnout strategies like working with local barber shops to bring pro-environmental voters to the polls.

### **Cincinnati Climate Slate**

Cincinnati will elect a new mayor and an almost entirely new city council in November. This is an opportunity to elect a full municipal government dedicated to fighting climate change. In the next term, the city council will vote to approve or reject the projects from the city's Green Cincinnati Plan. Pureval, 35, is a progressive Democrat of Indian-Tibetan descent. Pureval published a [comprehensive environmental platform](#) as part of his commitment to making Cincinnati a leader throughout the midwest on local climate action.

### **Cleveland Mayor**

Cleveland is one of just a few cities to have a municipally-owned electric company - Cleveland Public Power (CPP). CPP still gets the majority of its power from Prairie State, one of the largest coal-based energy providers in the country. The mayor of Cleveland, with the support of Council, will have the ability to challenge, and potentially cancel the contract with Prairie State.

Justin Bibb, a young black local non-profit leader is the only candidate in the race who has committed to ending city contracts with coal heavy providers and to moving Cleveland to 100% clean energy. His opponent Kevin Kelley has been closely connected to utility companies and has not made any of the same climate and clean energy commitments.

### **Lima Mayor**

As a key "left behind" community that has suffered the loss of manufacturing jobs, Lima is a prime opportunity to build back better with a clean energy economy.

Mayor candidate Sharetta Smith has a long track record of civic service and championing environmental action. She was the current Mayor's Chief of Staff and has pledged to continue, and expand upon the city's recent clean energy success. If elected she would be the first female and first black mayor of Lima. However, her opponent has spent her career in the oil and gas industry and made it clear her vision of economic revival would center more drilling and extraction in and around Lima.

### **Dearborn Mayor**

State Rep. Abdullah Hammoud is running to become Dearborn's first Arab-American mayor, the city with the largest proportion of Arab Americans in the United States. Hammoud -- formerly a Michigan League of Conservation Voters board member -- has proven himself a fearless and tirelessly advocate for clean drinking water, battling air pollution from industries in the city, and



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expanding health care access to its residents. As state representative, Hammoud championed legislation to hold polluters accountable, take action on climate change and invest in clean drinking water.

### **Michigan LCV PAC investment**

Michigan LCV PAC has attended multiple canvases with Hammoud's campaign. Conservation Voters of Michigan PAC executed a \$100,000 campaign, investing in digital and a field program to knock 12,000 doors.

### **Other races to watch**

#### **Grand Haven Municipal Races**

Michigan LCV is supporting candidates running for Grand Haven City Council and Grand Haven Board of Light and Power, the governing body of the city's municipal energy company. Grand Haven is currently considering building a new natural gas plant on Harbor Island, which was discovered to be contaminated with toxic PFAS chemicals.

#### **Colorado City Councils**

Conservation Colorado is investing in 20 city council races in five communities throughout the state. Local elections in Colorado are particularly important since the passage of landmark oil and gas legislation that gives local governments more control over new oil and gas drilling.

Conservation Colorado is investing in council races in Aurora, Commerce City, Westminster, Pueblo and Thornton spending a total of over \$150,000 to build leadership and flip several of the cities to pro-conservation majorities.

#### **Pennsylvania Judicial and Local Races**

Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania Victory Fund engaged in judicial and local races in Bucks, Lehigh, and Northampton Counties this fall. They supported candidates for Pennsylvania's state Supreme, Superior, and Commonwealth Courts, as well as local elections in each county. These races are an opportunity to solidify control of the increasingly crucial state judiciary, which ensures a free and fair democracy in addition to playing an important role in shaping environmental policy and regulatory actions. This November is also a chance to elect environmental champions to key positions at the local level, where climate champions will have the opportunity to hold polluters accountable and make important decisions related to zoning and planning.

CVPA VF's program spent \$80,000 focused on mail and digital programs that highlight the slate of pro-environment candidates.

#### **Boise City Council and Caldwell Mayor**



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Three seats on the Boise City Council are up for election this November, and Conservation Voters for Idaho is supporting two pro-conservation incumbents. Lisa Sanchez and Holli Woodings are running for reelection in Districts 3 and 5, respectively, and CVI is boosting their campaigns with mail and digital programs. The Boise City Council currently has 100% pro-conservation representation, which has been key to helping Boise Mayor Lauren McLean enact climate action policy and clean energy commitments.

CVI is also running digital ads in support of Jarom Wagoner, candidate for Caldwell Mayor and a former state legislator. All three candidates are also being supported with paid phone programs. In total, CVI is investing \$20,000 in their municipal work this fall.

## **Earlier 2021 elections efforts**

### **California Recall**

California Environmental Voters (formerly CLCV) spent a total of \$385,000 as part of the successful effort to defeat the recall of California Governor Gavin Newsom in September. Their digital and phone programs targeted more than 144,000 Democratic voters and independents, along with 30,000 young voters of color in historically excluded communities across the state, including communities in East LA County, Sacramento, Central Valley, and the Inland Empire. T

CA Environmental Voters also partnered with UFCW and the Consumer Attorneys of CA for a digital program in the Bay Area, which targeted 90,000 voters.

By successfully defeating the recall of Governor Newsom, California retained a climate champion in the Governor's Mansion who had signed an executive order to halt fracking, sped up the state's transition away from fossil fuels, and preserved California's coastline and natural habitat.

### **Lincoln City Council**

This spring, Nebraska Conservation Voters invested \$255,000 to successfully maintain a pro-environment majority on the Lincoln City Council. Three at-large seats were up for election, and keeping an environmental majority would ensure Lincoln could continue to move forward on an ambitious climate action plan for the city, and have clean energy champions appointed by the City Council to the Lincoln Electric System Board, one of three public electric utilities in Nebraska.

NCV supported Bennie Shobe, Sandra Washington, and Tom Beckius during the primary and general elections, through direct contributions to the coordinated campaign as well as to each of the candidates. NCV also ran targeted mail and field programs for the candidates during the general election. All three of the candidates were elected to the City Council, maintaining a pro-environment majority that will have the opportunity to fill three seats on the Lincoln Electric



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System Board with clean energy champions, ensuring the LES decarbonization goal and Lincoln Climate Action plan will stay in place.

### **Wisconsin municipal elections**

Wisconsin Conservation Voters supported several municipal candidates during the April 2021 municipal elections. WCV's \$21,000 program consisted of targeted mail and digital plans, and resulted in the election of several climate champions.

Mitch Reynolds narrowly won his campaign to become Mayor of La Crosse, a pro-conservation and pro-democracy champion who will help La Crosse implement its commitment to clean energy. In addition to Mayor Reynolds, WCV also helped elect three city council members: Mackenzie Mindel, Rebecca Schwarz, and Mark Neumann.

The Town of Peshtigo has some of the worst instances of PFAS contamination, and Cindy Boyle has been an outspoken advocate to address the issue. Her win as Board Chair flipped the town board to a pro-conservation and female majority, and positioned the board to take local action on PFAS.

Emily Siegrist was successfully elected to an at-large seat on the Brown Deer Village Board of Trustees. She won decisively against two incumbents in a three-way race where the top two vote-getters were elected, and put Brown Deer in play for passing clean energy commitments and plans.