



## **Know Your State's Most Pressing Environmental Issues Before Election Day**

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Pollution is killing oysters in Oregon. So much of New Jersey is paved that its storm water has nowhere to go. And in Nevada, the federal government wants to turn a mountain into a storage site for nuclear waste. You should know your state's most pressing environmental issues before you head to the polls, and Popular Science has a guide to help you brush up.

The guide is technically on “science policy” issues, but almost all of them relate to ways that legislation (or lack of it) can affect the air you breathe, the water you drink, and the ground you stand on. A few highlights:

- California is making good progress on its goal to go carbon-free by 2045, but now the federal government is challenging the state's ability to set its own emissions requirements. The California League of Conservation Voters and the California Environmental Justice Alliance both have voting guides that can help you figure out these and other issues.
- Pennsylvania's shale deposits are full of natural gas, and the “fracking” process of extracting it has been a major controversy for years. (The short version: it makes companies a lot of money, but potentially contaminates groundwater.) The Philadelphia Inquirer has an analysis of the governor candidates' environmental positions here, including the incumbent's history on fracking-related issues. Meanwhile, a group of environmental organizations has compiled an environmental scorecard for members of the state legislature.
- New York's biggest environmental issues relate to water quality. The governor, who is up for re-election, has been accused of dragging his feet on setting maximum allowable levels of toxic chemicals in drinking water. There are also harmful algal blooms in some of the state's lakes. The league of Conservation Voters has some thoughts on those issues here.

Environmental issues are some of the trickiest ones in politics, because legislators and officials are trying to juggle environmental issues with other concerns, and there tend to be tradeoffs. For example, the two voters' guides we linked for California disagree on a water-related proposition: it would restore wetlands, but it would also take money away from the effort to reduce carbon emissions (to name just a few considerations in what is, itself, a complex proposal). You don't have to vote a particular way, but you should know the issues so you can figure out where your vote will matter most.