About You

Your Name: Ben Jealous

What office are you running for, and as which party?: Democratic candidate for Governor of Maryland

Policy Positions

Do you support a swift transition to 100% renewable energy, like wind and solar?

Yes

Please say more about what you'd do if elected to bring about a 100% renewable energy economy that works for all of us.

My goal is for Maryland to reach 100% renewable energy as quickly as possible, while also avoiding regressively raising rates on working families to an unmanageable degree. Market forces are already going to get us to our current goals, we need to think bigger and do what we can to protect our environment.

We should not be counting waste incineration as a renewable source of energy and I support phasing that out through legislation. We have to pursue 100% renewable energy in an economically responsible manner, which means investing heavily in clean energy, job training and providing incentives for our public schools, community colleges, and four year institutions to prepare and train students for a clean energy economy. I will build on the surge of clean energy jobs in Maryland, and put our state on a path to 100% clean energy well before mid-century to create a healthy planet, more jobs and prosperity for the people of Maryland. I will also revive plans to create a functional and modern transportation system that serves our citizens and reduces our state's carbon pollution and other pollutants that affect the health of our children and the members of our families and communities with respiratory problems. I will work to make Baltimore, and other at-risk communities, more resilient to climate change. We urgently need to explore natural infrastructure solutions to make sure Baltimore's citizens and Maryland's coastal residents can survive being on the front line of increased natural disasters and sea level rise.

I live on the tributaries of the Chesapeake. It's become clear to me that we cannot rely on the Trump Administration, EPA Chief Scott Pruitt, or a neutered EPA to fund the critical work of restoring the Chesapeake. I will also prioritize ways to address the most critical needs for that ecosystem. Finally, while the Trump Administration has turned a blind eye to America's broken infrastructure, I will make fixing Baltimore's broken sewers, leaded service lines, and transportation infrastructure a priority.
Do you support a moratorium on all new fossil fuel infrastructure, like pipelines and fracked gas power plants?
Yes

Please say more about what you'd do if elected to stop the expansion of the fossil fuel industry and keep fossil fuels in the ground.

Clean energy is often less expensive, produces more local jobs for Marylanders, and prevents pollution in our communities than fossil fuels. We will lead our state towards 100% clean energy by putting us on a path to transition to 100% wind, water and solar for all purposes and this will be at the top of my agenda. As governor, I will be opposed to any and all new fossil fuel infrastructure.

Do you support a just and equitable transition to a fossil free economy that works for all of us?
Yes

Please say more about what you'd do if elected to ensure a just and equitable transition. We're interested in climate policies that seek to remedy existing environmental and social injustices.

Environmental justice is a serious concern of mine and will be central to my environmental agenda. As President of the NAACP, the first program I launched was the Climate Justice program. I support legislation requiring MDE to consider collective sources of pollution when issuing permits, ensuring that underserved communities have access to high quality, affordable mass transit, and building community owned-renewables.

Running a Progressive Campaign

Do you pledge not to accept any contributions from the fossil fuel industry, as defined by the "No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge"?
Yes

Do you support fossil fuel divestment campaigns in your state and around the world?
Yes

Have you participated in any major climate mobilizations, marches, direct actions, or sit-ins in the past year?

The first protest I attended of my own volition was an anti-clear cutting protest, and this early commitment to our environment followed me my entire life. As a young journalist in Mississippi I covered the poisoning of a community after an explosion of a nearby chemical plant. From there, I helped launch the Neighborhood Green Corps at Ralph Nader’s Public Interest Research Group. At the NAACP, the first program I launched was the Climate Justice Program. Under my leadership, the NAACP supported efforts at a cap-and-trade climate bill and when the fight against the Keystone pipeline in DC
was launched, I went to speak directly with the protestors and was one of the first national figures to lend support (and persuaded civil rights legend Julian Bond to go to jail to support the fight) and a little over a year ago, I sat on the pavement next to Bill McKibben blocking the doors outside the Army Corps of Engineers building during the Dakota Access fight. I have a clear vision when it comes to the environment: it intersects with the economy, civil rights, and public health and it will be a core priority for me when I’m governor.

What's your relationship with leading climate activists in your district?

I've been endorsed by Friends of the Earth Action and Progressive Maryland and have been working with environmental justice activists and climate activists to develop an environmental platform that works for all Marylanders.

Please share an example of how you like to talk about the intersection of climate and other social justice issues on the campaign trail.

There is no way to extricate our fight to save our planet and the fight for racial and class equality. As the former national President of the NAACP and a lifelong civil rights leader, I view my environmental activism as a civil rights issue. I'm committed to making sure that we prioritize equity when developing policies that deal with climate, energy, and the environment. For example, I support legislation requiring MDE to consider collective sources of pollution when issuing permits.

Would you be interested in doing a Facebook live event with 350 Action staff and local leaders?

Yes

On September 9th, 2018, the climate movement will come together in California and around the world for a massive day of climate action. Are you willing to mark this date on your calendar and potentially join us at an event?

Yes

Are you willing to join us at climate movement actions to speak out against the fossil fuel industry and/or the Trump Administration once you are in office?

Yes

Demographics and Identity

Race: Black

Gender: Male

If you'd like, tell us more about your identity in your own words:
**Additional Follow-Up**

Our goal is to endorse “climate progressives” who are strong on climate and share our progressive vision on other issues too. Please list other progressive endorsements your campaign has received so far.


*For identification purposes only, Rea Carey is the executive director of the National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund. This statement reflects her personal views.*