

350 Action 2018 Candidate Questionnaire

Robert K. Massie

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About You

Your Name: Robert K. Massie

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

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.

I have been a proponent of a just transition to renewable energy since the late 1980s. I released a detailed plan for how to do this in Massachusetts, as my first full policy report.

I have spent much of my adult life combating climate change, creating multiple institutions with a global footprint working to save the planet. Indeed, I organized the first large public meeting on the threat of climate change at the Boston Museum of Science in April 1992 – 26 years ago.

For seven years, starting in 1996, I served as executive director of Ceres, building it into the largest coalition of investor and environmental groups in the USA. I worked with major corporations, using shareholder and pension power to challenge and negotiate with the Fortune 500 to step up their commitment to sustainability and justice.

In 1998, I co-founded the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) serving as chair until 2002. GRI raised standards of corporate accountability and transparency for labor practices, human rights compliance, energy use, and environmental impacts, by then grouped under sustainability.

I created the Investor Network on Climate Risk in 2003 to persuade major pension funds to investigate the climate risk embedded in their portfolios and to invest in the transition away from fossil fuels. INCR now includes 146 investors and 23 trillion in assets.

I support an immediate end to all investments in fossil fuel infrastructure. As governor, I would support the following efforts to accelerate the transition to a 100% renewable economy: Increase our Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), with our annual targets for additional renewables of 2–5% per year from the

current 1% per year, to ensure we reach 100% renewables before 2050.

To do that, we need to end the net metering cap that slows the adoption of solar power, accelerate renewable clean energy project approvals, increase the size and number of offshore wind projects, foster coordination and sharing of key infrastructure among renewable clean energy project developers, implement a schedule for accelerated decommissioning of fossil fuel and nuclear power plants, establish a green bank to support renewable energy projects for those that cannot otherwise get funds from the private sector, maintain or increase electric vehicle incentives, restore time of day metering, eliminate recently imposed fees that punish solar power generating customers, improve grid adaptability, and add substantial storage capacity to the grid to lower peak demand and help reduce overall energy costs. To accomplish this, we need to get the foxes (utility companies and their partners) out of the chicken coop, and completely overhaul our Department of Public Utilities, which has failed to protect consumer interests.

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.

As stated above, I support an immediate end to all investments in fossil fuel infrastructure. I will take every possible step to block all investments in new fossil fuel infrastructure of any kind. Maintenance investments in existing fossil fuel infrastructure will also be scrutinized. (In many cases, abandonment of existing fossil fuel infrastructure may make more sense than maintaining the fossil fuel infrastructure with ratepayer funds when all costs and public health and welfare are considered.)

I also support a fracking ban and will take steps to end our sending ratepayers' money to out of state interests for fracked gas. I support full divestment from fossil fuels by state and municipal pension funds. I support an end to offshore drilling for fossil fuels. To accomplish this, we need to reconstitute the Department of Public Utilities to exclude utility interests and to take other steps to address the actions of ISO-New England, which has repeatedly acted to slow the growth of renewables in our region.

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.

Too often we have seen technology changes bring benefits to those who are already well-off, while leaving others behind. Though change is rarely even, smooth or simple, a new approach to energy would go a long way toward achieving greater economic justice. As governor, I will embrace many of the good ideas listed in the question and also insure that the transition meets its objectives while assisting

communities across the state - especially low-income communities and communities of color.

The transition to clean renewable energy could create tens of thousands of new well-paying jobs, especially with leadership to make Massachusetts a net exporter of clean renewable energy. But change of this magnitude can also be disruptive in unintended ways.

I will work to mitigate any energy transition effects that would otherwise impose hardships on lower income households. We must pay special attention to those communities who have unfairly borne the impact of infrastructure that provides energy to all of us.

As we prepare to spend money modernizing our infrastructure and investing in our resources, we must be mindful of who will benefit and who is in need. A proper transition will deliver cleaner, cheaper energy and help all families and businesses with their expenses. Our communities will be healthier, and we can slow the dangerous impacts of climate change on our vulnerable communities and industries.

My platform includes switching from diesel and propane powered buses to battery electric buses and electrifying our commuter rail network, part of which would be operated on a mass transit-type frequency, greatly improving our rapid transit system, while reducing pollution in urban areas.

I would ask our Attorney General to examine the tobacco industry court settlements, which may have set a precedent for corporate responsibility when a company willfully denies known facts. Like the tobacco situation, we have major corporations that denied well-established scientific facts about climate change for many years. This is worth considering as we approach the climate liability issue. The science on climate change has been clear for decades. Fossil fuel companies understood this and went ahead to profit at the expense of our planet, our country and our Commonwealth and its citizens. I would support a comprehensive legal and political strategy to claw back some of those fraudulently obtained gains.

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?

Yes.

When Bill McKibben first conceived of the fossil fuel divestment, he consulted with me as an expert on the anti-apartheid divestment struggle. At 350's request, I have spoken out for divestment across the US and toured Australia for 350 in 2015.

One of the first student actions for divestment was at the Rhode Island School of Design and instigated by students of my wife, Professor Anne Tate. I was appointed to the Retirement Board of Somerville by Mayor Curtatone in order to advance their divestment process, the first to do so in Massachusetts. I have advised student groups at Brown, Boston University, Boston College, Harvard, MIT, Brandeis, Vassar, Yale, Tufts, and many, many others.

I was at the Women's Marches, Climate March and the Science March in Boston. I participated in 350's action at the State House to push the governor to stop building fossil fuel infrastructure. I visited the Weymouth compressor station site as part of an effort to stop that pipeline. I have spoken several times to the Sugar Shack alliance in Western Massachusetts. I advised and participated and addressed many of the Harvard divestment protests including speaking at Heat Week several years ago, disrupting a major 25th reunion event with the president of Harvard, and occupying Harvard's alumni offices overnight more than a year ago.

I am running for governor in part to fight the climate crisis and the massive injustice it has created. We are at a critical point in time, with respect to the climate crisis and to the lack of leadership and detrimental actions of the Trump administration. I am more than willing to join climate actions to respond to the challenges we are facing. I am compelled to join climate actions, as I have since 1992, and will continue to do so once in office.

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

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

We live in an interconnected world. A core lesson of sustainability is that problems in one area cannot be solved in isolation from others. We must address climate issues to protect the planet, our region, our health and our economy. However, even if we take the steps that I and other long-time climate activists have been advocating for decades, we still are going to see near-term climate impacts and many of these will affect low-income communities and communities of color that are less able to combat those impacts.

For example, rising sea levels are going to require significant steps to protect many urban and coastal communities. The costs of these actions should be borne in a manner that does not place undue burden on low-income communities or communities of color just because they happen to live in low-lying areas. Those communities did not profit much from our fossil-fuel economy. In fact, many of these same communities suffered measurably from higher levels of air pollution with resulting negative health impacts as a result of our fossil fuel economy. These same communities should not now be unfairly burdened with the consequences of a transition from our fossil fuel economy or the sea level rise impacts caused by climate-change.

I started the Sustainable Solutions Lab at UMass Boston to advance the cause of climate justice in Massachusetts, bringing together climate activists with local community activists of color to discuss the steadily increasing destructive impact of climate change on low income and communities of color in coastal Massachusetts. We held two major symposia at UMass Boston on Climate Change and Social Justice (2016) and on Fighting Economic and Climate Displacement (2017) where the majority of panel

participants where leaders of color.

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: Caucasian

Gender: Male

If you'd like, tell us more about your identity in your own words: I am a middle aged straight white male. But I have been a passionate advocate for racial, economic, disability, and gender justice my whole life. I have coped with physical handicaps, born with hemophilia, confined to a wheelchair for much of my childhood and diagnosed with HIV at the point of maximal fear of that epidemic. I also contracted Hepatitis C from my blood infusions and had a liver transplant in July 2009 that cured the cirrhosis, hepatitis, and even my original hemophilia. These experiences with mortality have left me with the deep conviction that every one of us should be using the relatively limited time we have on this planet fighting fearlessly and relentlessly to defend it and its inhabitants.