



THE GREEN PAGE

A community project to help us live on less, live more lightly, and live better.

The Governor's Race and the Environment

We have five candidates for governor: Deval Patrick, Charlie Baker, Grace Ross, Jill Stein, and Tim Cahill. I thought I'd break up my breakdown of their positions over two issues—mainly because most of the candidates don't even post about environmental issues on their websites.

The big focus is healthcare, followed by taxes and jobs. Not that there's anything wrong with that—I was unemployed and we could all use a break. But it's obvious that the environment, and good environmental policy, won't be on the candidate's minds unless we ask them about it and bring it up as a priority to them. So I encourage everyone to contact the candidates and ask them questions about their views on environmental policy. If they hear about it from enough voters, they'll suddenly realize it's a burning issue near and dear to their hearts. It's uncanny how that happens.

But... I will start the GOP candidate and our incumbent, Deval Patrick. In the summer issue, I will focus on Jill Stein, Grace Ross, and Tim Cahill (and we'll see if they respond to my questions that I sent them—unfortunately, I got no response from either the incumbent or the GOP challenger).

Charlie Baker

Charlie Baker's position on the environment is that protecting it is a good and fine thing as long as it doesn't hurt business and it doesn't cost us money. He seems to be very pro-business and fiscally conservative; he may be more for tax breaks and incentives for businesses to do the right thing. He has said that investing in solutions will help the environment and will also help the economy by developing new technology, creating new jobs, and cutting energy costs.

Baker says on his website that he is for policies and programs that would encourage energy efficiency and energy conservation. He is also in favor of renewable energy sources as long as it doesn't drive up the already high energy costs in Massachusetts.

Deval Patrick

Governor Patrick has an unfair advantage in a way, as he's been the Governor of Massachusetts and could push for certain environmental legislation. So far, it's been very pro-green business—he and Baker seem to have that in common, though they spin the numbers differently. This is what he's done so far in office:

- Passed the nation's first management plan to manage and protect the state's ocean waters.
- Reformed the Department of Conservation and Recreation; making sure it focused on its original mission of preserving and maintaining our state parks, beaches, and forests. As part of this, the DCR was relieved of its responsibility of maintaining bridges.
- Protected 54,000 acres of open space in the state, and created a program that provides funding options for developing cities to improve their parks.
- Explored incentives to increase the use of renewable energy.
- Launched a state energy efficiency program that could save an estimated \$6B over the next three years.
- Passed the Green Communities Act, which will increase the renewable energy provided to Massachusetts. The Act also provides incentives for communities to make greener energy choices.
- Passed the Global Warming Solutions Act, which requires a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of up to 25% by 2020, and up to 80% by 2050.
- Supports Cape Wind
- Signed legislation that would advance the biofuels sector in Massachusetts.

If You Can't Go Meatless. . .

Many green folks are quick to tell you that the best way to save the Earth is to not eat meat anymore. And they have a point—the current way we raise meat—especially cows—uses a lot of petroleum. They aren't grass-fed (which can have its own problems with overgrazing and soil erosion if you aren't mindful about rotating your livestock and using sustainable methods of raising livestock). They are corn-fed—corn, which uses a lot of petroleum based fertilizers, which is trucked in with gas guzzling trucks for the cows to eat (and which is bad for the cows and causes all kinds of infections, which then requires them to be given antibiotics). Cows especially produce a lot of methane. This means they fart a lot. This is actually bad for the environment, as it adds to the greenhouse emissions. (This makes me reconsider my penchant for vegetarian chili, but I digress.)

But—here's the thing—I like meat. I went mostly vegetarian in England (thanks to a couple of salmonella outbreaks and emerging news about mad cow disease). My weight dropped like a ton of bricks and I was very cranky. I started craving cheese, and up until then, I despised cheese. (I still like cheese, by the way.)

There are some ways you can cut down on your meat consumption, save money, and eat well:

Use it all up. When you cook meat, use up every bit of it. If you make a roast chicken or a ham, save the leftover meat for use in casseroles, sandwiches, pot pies, skillet meals, soups, or other dishes during the week. Use the carcass/bone to make stock, and freeze the stock in 1 cup portions. You can also freeze it in ice cube trays—just make sure you wash them very well, and clearly mark the plastic freezer bag you place the cubes in, as these are NOT good additions for a cocktail or iced tea. These stock cubes are great if you want to add a little flavor to rice or pasta, thin out a thickened leftover soup, or sauté or steam some vegetables. The 1 cup portions of stock are to be used in place of canned stock for any recipes you need stock for. Or, you can make a quick soup using stock, some sort of starch (pasta, rice, tortellini, etc.), vegetables (including some frozen vegetables), and herbs and spices.

Size matters. A portion of meat for the average adult is about the size of a deck of cards, or the palm of your hand. So whatever you typically eat, cut in half, or possibly thirds.

Third, use less meat in your recipes or meals to begin with. Unless it's a whole bird you're roasting, you can cut things down. Not everyone needs a pound of meat on their plate.

Divide. I read that it was best nutritionally to divide your plate into quarters—one quarter was for meat/protein, one quarter was for starch, and two quarters was for vegetables—and eat accordingly. (OK, I admit that I tend to go heavy on the starch. . .) This is also good for the environment—you're cutting down your consumption of meat (and for a twofer, eating locally-grown produce just adds good green karma).

Don't be afraid to go meatless. You don't have to be a vegetarian to eat meatless meals once in a while, and I promise you don't have to eat tofu or sprouts if you don't want to. Eggplant parmesan, meatless chili, bean or vegetable soup, tomato and mozzarella with pesto on thick slices of crusty bread. . .you get the picture.

She reuses—and keeps it pretty

Susan Racicot found ways to reuse and salvage old towels. Using her serger sewing machine and an old towel, she created a bathmat to replace the one that was worn out.

She also used the same sewing machine to reseat the frayed ends of the towels—so they look like new.

Questions?

Comments?

Environmental angst?

Do you want to write an article or share your knowledge about how live a greener, more frugal life?

Contact me at

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