



RENEWABLE JUNEAU

Fall 2019 Assembly
Candidate Survey
Renewable Energy

Renewable Juneau recently sent a questionnaire to all four fall 2019 Juneau Assembly candidates regarding renewable energy issues. We received answers from all four candidates, Wade Bryson, Alicia Hughes-Skadijs, Greg Smith, and Carole Triem. Below, we provide the questions and the answers for you to consider prior to the municipal election on October 1.

Renewable Juneau would like to emphasize that we do not make statements for or against any candidate for office.

Questionnaire Answers from All Candidates

Question 1.

The Assembly adopted the Juneau Climate Action and Implementation Plan in 2011, and the related Juneau Renewable Energy Strategy (JRES) in 2018. These set goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and shifting the community from its current level of 20% renewable energy to 80% by 2045. At its December, 2018 planning retreat the Assembly identified implementation of the JRES as a priority goal for 2019.

Do you support continuing priority implementation of the JRES as an Assembly priority for the coming year? Why/why not?

Answer from Wade Bryson

I do support JRES and the continued implementation of it. Juneau should be at the fore front of sustainable energy. Juneau Hydro and Juneau District Heating will assist in our achieving our goals.

Answer from Alicia Hughes-Skandijs

Yes. Climate change is upon us, and Alaska is ground zero for its effects. Juneau has an opportunity to be a statewide leader in implementing renewable energy and our quality of life depends on doing so.

Answer from Greg Smith

Yes. Climate change is one of the top issues facing our society. Taking action on climate is not only a moral imperative, but also a major statement of our community determining its direction for the future. Reducing carbon and other emissions will not only make our community more healthy and engaged with the rest of the world, it will also bring numerous other tangible benefits: reduced energy costs to residents, economic diversification and growth, new jobs, increased innovation, increased research investment, increased visitation and migration, and more.

Answer from Carole Triem

Yes, absolutely! I am excited that this was an Assembly goal and it's good to see forward movement on the JRES and we're starting to put our money where our mouth is. I want to keep it up!

Question 2.

The JRES includes 4 major implementation areas: a CBJ energy management program; reducing dependence on fossil fuels for space heating; reducing dependence on fossil fuels for transportation; and supporting efforts to provide new renewable energy supplies.

To which would you give priority and why?

Answer from Wade Bryson

The city just appropriated money for an electric heat pump program. We are also at the beginning of an EV charging station growth period. There is support for dock electrification which would be positive for the environment and the economy. I've advocated for Juneau District Heating which would have a big impact on heating fuel.

Answer from Alicia Hughes-Skandijs

Reducing our fossil fuel use in transportation by phasing in electric buses is a tangible step that the city is taking and which I support. Heating is a huge energy demand, and I'm excited by the possibility of using large scale heat pumps to provide warmth to the municipality, which Juneau District Heating is currently working on. I'm grateful to live in a town where electricity is provided by clean energy via hydropower.

Answer from Greg Smith

These are all important areas to focus on, but at this time, I would likely prioritize a CBJ energy management program. I would do this for X reasons: 1) making

government more efficient will reduce costs and encourage greater trust in government; 2) it is an area we can directly control; 3) savings from an energy management program could be reinvested to realize further cost and resources savings; and 4) best practices and lessons learned could be shared with CBJ businesses, organizations, citizens, and more to amplify savings.

Answer from Carole Triem

I think there's great momentum going with Alaska HeatSmart and the work Renewable Juneau has done on promoting heat pumps, so I would put reducing dependence on fossil fuels for space heating as a priority to capitalize on the great work that is already happening. Next, I would love to see a CBJ energy management program. I would advocate for a staff position within CBJ to coordinate that, and I would like to see that person work with other departments to integrate sustainability in all of the decision making within CBJ.

Question 3.

Electrification of transportation is an important strategy identified in the JRES. The CBJ has written 3 successful grants for electric buses; the first of these will arrive in spring 2020. These will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions while saving money on operations and maintenance. The CBJ has also obtained a couple of electric vehicles (Chevy Bolts) for its light duty vehicle fleet.

Do you support continuing to shift the CBJ vehicle fleet to electric vehicles? Why/why not? If yes, what can we do to accelerate adoption?

Answer from Wade Bryson

Yes, I am for increasing the electric bus fleet. I believe a cautious approach is important as the technology for EV's is rapidly changing. As the cities EV infrastructure improves it will be easier to increase public transportation EVs. Using circulators and EV's for light duty is an excellent approach with a lower initial cost.

Answer from Alicia Hughes-Skandijs

Yes. I support electrification because our hydropower is clean and renewable. The budget uncertainties we are currently facing make fast-tracking our fleet improvements a little more challenging, but I think we should continue seeking grants and otherwise planning to continue phasing in electric vehicles with a goal of eventually replacing all of our fossil fuel vehicles. We should also encourage other heavy transportation users such as the tourism industry to make the switch by ensuring that charging stations are readily available.

Answer from Greg Smith

Yes. If for the sole reason of saving money, electric vehicles and buses should be adopted and used. However, beyond cost savings, these vehicles provide numerous other benefits: improvements to air quality, promotion of a sustainable "brand" for our community - which will increase tourism visitation and

experiences, and a reduction in emissions. Use of these vehicles could also create industries and jobs (electric vehicle mechanics, for instance), speed installation of required hardware and infrastructure, and encourage widespread adoption of these vehicles.

Answer from Carole Triem

Yes, I support the shift of the CBJ vehicle fleet to electric vehicles. Using our new assembly goal of sustainability and budgeting accordingly could be one way to accelerate adoption.

Question 4.

Cruise ship visitation numbers continue to climb, dramatically increasing downtown congestion, vehicle exhaust and cruise ship emissions, and reducing both the quality of life for residents, and the quality of visitors' experiences. Some solutions that have been proposed include:

Shifting from diesel to electric buses; a "circulator" bus system to reduce congestion in the S. Franklin/downtown area, and plugging in cruise ships to reduce emissions while they are docked.

Which of these measures would you support? Why or why not?

Answer from Wade Bryson

(see answer to Question 4 part 2)

Answer from Alicia Hughes-Skandijs

I support plugging cruise ships in. I would also like to see the tour companies phasing in electric vehicles. I also support a circulator bus. Our quality of air is noticeably diminished when cruise ships run their engines in port, and anyone who's been stuck behind an idling motor coach knows the cumulative impact they have. Clean energy will make summers more pleasant for us and visitors to our town.

Answer from Greg Smith

I am open to all of the options presented. All of these options could increase quality of life for residents and the experience for visitors. As must be done with all projects, costs, benefits, funding mechanisms, and other criteria must be evaluated to examine viability and establish priority.

Answer from Carole Triem

I support all of those ideas, although I know that some of them will be harder to accomplish than others and require buy-in from other parties.

Question 4 part 2.

Are there additional modifications to tourism management that you would like to see?

Answer from Wade Bryson

This summer and next will be the most congested summers in Juneau's modern cruise period. By the summer of 2021 the Egan road project will be complete, and the Archipelago project will open. Both of those projects will have significant impact on the congestion in the downtown corridor. It is important to have as many EV charging stations and electrification of the docks for all the many benefits those actions will bring.

I'm honored to serve the people of Juneau. One of my next goals is to implement a single use plastic reduction strategy. "Save our Landfill" will be my moto. Every piece of trash we prevent from entering the landfill will give us more time. Thanks to Renewable Juneau for the work you do.

Answer from Alicia Hughes-Skandijs

This is a hot topic, and one that the assembly is preparing to take up. It's hard to say without knowing what is possible and what is not, but I am interested in looking at ways that we can cap this industry's impacts. While tourism is a renewable resource, we want it managed just as carefully and prudently as any other resource so that we are not harming the environment that brings visitors here every year.

Answer from Greg Smith

I am hearing from many neighbors about the impacts of tourism; I live downtown and experience these impacts myself. I do not know what the exact solution is, but a possible idea is to establish a task force or other type of analytical process to examine impacts and suggest ways to mitigate them.

Answer from Carole Triem

I think spreading out the attractions along the waterfront will help ease congestion. I had hoped that CBJ would have control of the support lot to help with that goal, although we may need to go back to the drawing board. Something's got to give – I think we're reaching levels of cruise ships that is changing our town in ways that are not in line with what our community values. I don't think there's an easy answer, particularly given that so many Juneau residents do depend on the industry for their livelihoods. I think there should be an Assembly committee on the issue and I also think our long-range waterfront plan is in desperate need of an update.

Thank you again for running for office and for sharing your views. Do you have any final thoughts about the importance of local climate action and renewable energy in Juneau?

Answer from Wade Bryson

I'm honored to serve the people of Juneau. One of my next goals is to implement a single use plastic reduction strategy. "Save our Landfill" will be my moto. Every piece of trash we prevent from entering the landfill will give us more time. Thanks to Renewable Juneau for the work you do.