

PARTY: Democrat
NAME: Abdul El-Sayed

ELECTIVE OFFICE: Governor
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AMP is a non-partisan coalition of more than 30,000 Michiganders who know that reliable, affordable, and sustainable electricity is vital to Michigan's future. We are dedicated to helping Michigan families and businesses stay informed and involved in the energy debates that affect us all.

AMP is inviting all candidates for state legislative office in the 2018 elections to complete the following questionnaire to help our members better understand where their candidates stand on key energy issues facing our state. **Please feel free to respond directly in this document and return it to us by email at AMPVotes@AllianceforMichiganPower.com, or return it by mail to AMP, 2145 Commons Parkway, Okemos, MI 48864.** You should also feel free to use more than the space allotted for your full answers. (If you have received a printed copy of the questionnaire and would prefer an electronic copy, please email us at the address above, and we will provide the questionnaire electronically.)

1. In 2016, the Michigan legislature passed a new comprehensive energy law (updates to Public Acts 341 and 342) that established a framework to help energy providers plan for our state's energy future. The 2016 plan included provisions to keep electricity reliable for all Michigan consumers, increase renewable energy from 10% to 15% of our state's total energy portfolio, and encourage greater energy efficiency. What are your views on this law?

I believe we need to take our commitment to renewable energy a step further by transitioning to 100% renewable energy by 2050. We aim to establish a Pure Michigan Infrastructure Bank that will help to finance investments in renewable energy among both energy companies and individuals. We aim to change legislation to support net metering to break the big consumer energy companies' monopolies on energy. We also aim to support revolving loans for businesses, homeowners, and tenants on 7-year bases for energy efficiency, and 10 years for renewables, with 5% interest rates, expand Michigan's Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing program, and undertake a public promotional campaign. We will also provide credit enhancements for low and middle-income homeowners to invest in efficiency upgrades, small-scale solar, and other clean energy products, while streamlining Michigan's clean energy funding through targeted financing mechanisms.

2. The 2016 energy law also moved Michigan to using Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs). IRPs centralize and standardize planning for our electric system using a transparent process overseen by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC). The IRP process is designed to ensure investments in our electric system achieve our goals of affordability, reliability, and sustainability in the most balanced way possible. Do you think IRPs provide a good framework to support Michigan’s energy needs moving forward? (Please circle your answer below and explain why you do or don’t support the IRP process for Michigan.)

a. Yes. (Please explain.)

Yes- sustainability and transparency are key components of my platform for governor. Transparent oversight like this has the capacity to ensure that access to the electric grid is distributed statewide and doesn’t leave any Michiganders behind, while regulating rates equitably and cutting into the potential for corporate abuse. Additionally, we need stricter regulations on the MPSC to make sure that they will not obfuscate the IRPs for corporations like DTE when they try to use their money pulpit to buy our politics.

Finally, we must ensure that we are not deterring individuals or communities from investing in green infrastructure due to the costs incurred by our current system. That is why my administration plans to utilize our infrastructure bank to help finance local endeavors.

b. No. (Please explain.) _____

3. Michigan consumers pay for electricity based on how much energy they use and when they use it (i.e., electricity consumed during “peak hours” costs more than electricity consumed during “non-peak hours”). This approach minimizes the subsidizing of electricity costs for one consumer by other consumers. Do you believe this is the right way to establish consumer costs? Are there any instances in which you would support subsidies for some types of energy or some types of consumers?

“Peak hour” pricing, while incentivizing consumers to be more energy efficient, gives an alibi to energy providers who are unwilling to invest in cheaper, greener methods of meeting high demand. When providers face a usage surge, they respond by turning to high-cost, pollutant-heavy plants for help. Rather than punish consumers for this behavior, we need to ensure that we are investing in alternative sources of energy that can meet high demand in an equitable, sustainable way.

One of the first measures we must take is to ensure that the energy we do create gets used. Energy inefficiency contributes to high energy bills, increases greenhouse gas emissions, and has compounding negative health effects, as families who struggle to pay their energy bill often sacrifice other necessities, leading to food insecurity and negative health effects. Yet, low-income families in Michigan on average spend 15 percent of their income on energy — almost triple the U.S. average of 6 percent — thanks to a combination of older, less efficient housing, large temperature fluctuations, and lack of access to energy efficiency programs.

Home energy efficiency upgrades are one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce energy waste, often reducing energy costs by 15 to 30 percent. Thus, I will leverage the Pure Michigan Bank to increase access to low interest energy efficiency loans by providing grant funding for Michigan Saves to expand its services and by working with cities to increase access to free or low-cost services — including audits, project planning, and affordable financing — to building owners.

We will also work with organizations such as Michigan Energy Efficiency For All (MEEFA) to increase access to building energy use data and help to ensure that adequate savings goals are allocated for low-income multifamily housing. The administration will also require all State of Michigan owned buildings to be benchmarked by January 2020 (as of August 2017, only about one in six were).

These measures will help empower consumers to control their own energy decisions, reducing demand and thus the need for “peak hour” premiums. Further, my administration will work to revitalize Michigan’s energy infrastructure so that the solution to collective electricity usage is not taxing Michigan’s families.

4. Michigan’s energy infrastructure is aging and requires new investments to maintain safe and reliable service. Technologies like smart meters and grid sensors are making our energy grid more efficient and resilient. How important do you believe it is for Michigan to invest in its energy infrastructure?

Our continued reliance on dirty energy has hurt — and will continue to hurt — the health of Michigan’s urban areas. Yet, our state government has done little to incentivize sustainability and the production of renewable energy. As a result, the health of many city residents, particularly those who are poor and of color, has suffered. Adults in Detroit were 29 percent more likely to be diagnosed with asthma. Cities, including Detroit and Grand Rapids, have experienced multiple sewage backups into sources of drinking water. And as recently as June, MDEQ was moving to approve a permit to expand a hazardous waste plant in Detroit, despite the fact that the expansion would further endanger the health of nearby communities where 81 percent of residents live below the poverty line.

Safety is paramount, and it is non-negotiable. As governor I would direct the DEQ to introduce new, green infrastructure, including stricter requirements for NPDES permits.

Many Michigan cities are already home to groups active in blue and green infrastructure — cost-effective projects that use the natural landscape and resources to manage stormwater, improve air quality, reduce noise pollution, and increase access to public green space. For example, Detroit recently greenlit a series of green infrastructure projects to reform the city’s stormwater management system, which will not only save the city close to \$1 billion over two decades, but also put a portion of the city’s large stock of vacant land to productive use.

I will enable local governments to design and implement similar asset-based blue and green infrastructure projects, either in conjunction with or in place of traditional infrastructure projects. In partnership with MDEQ and the Pure Michigan Bank, we will secure funding for local governments to re-evaluate water infrastructure requirements based on the most recent rainfall and extreme weather data, and make additional funding streams accessible to local governments that build and maintain partnerships with community landscape infrastructure organizations. The administration will also provide opportunities to utilize vacant land and other available resources for blue and green infrastructure projects.

Lastly, to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050, we would seek to implement an innovative “Clean Energy Infrastructure Bank” to invest statewide in renewable energy infrastructure. This type of bank would allow Michigan to transition to a renewable energy system, protect our natural resources and reduce our reliance on a system of energy that we know will eventually render our planet uninhabitable all while creating jobs that we know Michiganders desperately need.

The bank would be focused on empowering individuals to bypass their utility provider by financing small loans to households and municipalities— loans which would allow individuals to invest in solar or wind infrastructure and harvest their own energy, with the ability to sell their excess energy back into the grid through expanded net metering policies. This would not only break our reliance on dirty energy, but undercut the monopoly that utility companies and the fossil fuel industry have had for far too long.

The bank would also help finance the construction of fast charge stations along our major highways and within our population centers by offering low interest loans to townships and municipalities who choose to invest in green infrastructure. We will also work to ensure a fair, well regulated and competitive marketplace that both encourages technological innovation and holds big utility companies accountable to Michigan’s people and natural resources.

5. Recently, the Michigan Public Service Commission approved a new policy for rooftop solar users. This new policy allows energy providers to recoup the costs associated with maintaining the energy grid from these customers who use the grid both to feed excess electricity back into the grid and to access electricity from the grid when their solar panels are not producing enough energy. Up until now, rooftop solar users have been able to avoid paying these costs. What are your views on this new policy?

I don't believe in any policy which favors large corporations over individuals. This policy drives consumers away from sustainable energy. My administration will make renewable energy advantageous, allowing individuals to invest in independent solar and wind infrastructure--energy that can be harvested and sold back into the grid, on their own terms.

6. Michigan is transitioning from electricity predominantly generated from coal to a more diverse energy mix that also includes natural gas; renewables like solar, wind, and hydropower; and nuclear. Do you support this "all-of-the-above" energy strategy? Why or why not?

a. **Yes. (Please explain.)**

b. **No. (Please explain.)**

In 2016, coal accounted for about 36 percent of Michigan's electricity generation; natural gas accounted for about 25 percent; and four of the ten largest plants in the state are coal-fired, with many of these power plants located in or near Michigan's cities, affecting minority residents disproportionately. While I support renewable energy like solar, wind and hydropower, I do not support any continued reliance on fossil fuels, which includes natural gas. The science is clear, every drop of fossil fuel, "natural" or not, that we burn into our atmosphere is poisoning us, our children, and our environment.

We need to go further totally phasing out dirty energy like coal and natural gas and including a policy strategy that will continuously strive to innovate our energy generation to move us toward 100% renewables. Michigan is home to 21% of the world's fresh water; if we stopped draining our resources for quick cash from companies like Nestle, we could invest in Michigan's abundance and future, which could include hydropower and other green infrastructure utilities.

Setting aggressive renewable energy targets and providing incentives to encourage residential and commercial use can significantly lower emissions and spur growth in a thriving green economy. That is why I will ensure universal access to Michigan's clean economy through innovative green job training, access to affordable clean energy, and energy efficiency financing.

Lastly, to mitigate the effects of fossil fuel on the environment, my administration will work with the Michigan legislature to implement a statewide revenue neutral carbon offset. This will hold polluters accountable for their emissions while reducing the burden felt by hardworking Michiganders, particularly in communities that have been hit the hardest. Carbon polluters will

pay a fee beginning at \$30 per ton of CO2 in 2020, and increasing 5.2 percent annually, the revenue from which will be distributed as follows: 11 percent will go ratably to households earning below 200 percent of the federal poverty rate; a flat percentage income tax cut will go to households earning between 200 percent of the federal poverty rate and \$150,000; and a smaller lump sum payment will go to households making less than \$100,000. If enacted as proposed, this payment distribution could effectively cut middle class taxes by 4 to 6 percent without impacting economic growth.

7. Do you believe Michigan's energy mix should be mandated by law, or should energy providers have more flexibility to balance environmental concerns with affordability, reliability, and the rapid pace of technology advances in the energy sector?

Affordability poisoned 9,000 kids in Flint. I intend to fight for legislation and appoint leadership that puts people and the environment over the earnings of corporations. This means holding providers accountable for their decisions and mandating renewable energy by law. I will stop the state from colluding with businesses to pollute our water and our resources. For too long, back-room government deals have prioritized quick corporate cash over our environment and equitable access to health.

I support a robust environmental justice program that permeates all we do with respect to environmental policy and health policy to make sure that Michiganders have access to clean and healthy air and water - and consideration in decisions over state programming. That means passing real legislation that demands cooperation from big polluters and energy providers. My administration's policies will focus on a deliberate vision for the future which protects our state's citizens and environmental health while advancing our promise as the leader of industry.

8. What else would you like the AMP community to know about your views on Michigan energy and our state's energy future?

Renewable infrastructure aside, one of the largest hurdles on the path to reducing greenhouse gas emissions is ensuring that the public servants elected to spearhead this transition are not in the pockets of the fossil fuel industry. Currently, Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality is led by a former BP oil executive, and fossil fuel companies like Dow Chemical have already spent upwards of \$400,000 in the 2018 election cycle alone. I have already taken a clear pledge not to accept campaign donations from oil companies or fossil fuel executives. I intend on doing everything in my power to strengthen Michigan's incredibly weak campaign finance laws to

ensure that our politicians are not bought and paid for by institutions that place their corporate bottom line over the wellbeing of our state, country and planet.