

North Georgia Sierra Group
P.O. Box 1286
Blairsville Georgia 30514

Tuesday, May 23rd, 2000

Attn: Ron Jones, Blairsville
Larry Winslett, Dahlonega
Rodger Buerki, Atlanta

Thank you for your consideration of my candidacy. What follows are my replies to your Candidate Questionnaire for the Georgia State Legislature.

Candidate Information

Candidate Name: **Kerrie Dickson**, Green Party candidate for House District #8

Candidate Signature: _____

Address: **1426 Abe Cove Road; Hiawassee Georgia 30546**

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Campaign Manager: _____ Phone: _____

Environmental Leadership

1) What motivated you to run for office? Who are your most likely supporters?

While working to pass HB-672, the Voter Choice Act, I spoke with my incumbent representative, Ralph Twiggs about HB-672 and HB-1426. I was most displeased with his sponsorship of the trout stream piping bill and his blatant contempt for democracy.

I have worked as a community activist since 1967. Both parties have turned their backs on both environmental and social justice issues. My supporters will of course include citizens concerned with preserving the environment in my district. I also work on health care legislation and have been discussing medicaid cuts, HMOs and Veterans benefit cuts with the people of this district. I've been to nursing school, have a therapy degree. I have worked in hospitals, as well as medical offices. I believe the retirees of District #8 are concerned with both the environment and the lack of decent health care.

I can expect support from the senior citizens of my district. In addition, Greens from around Georgia have already traveled to this district to work on my campaign and I expect

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that this will continue.

I believe a voice of reason can only come from an objective third party candidate whose party is dedicated to ecological wisdom, grassroots democracy, social justice and peace and nonviolence. We've seen enough partisan bickering to last us all a lifetime. And quite frankly, all of our lives have been endangered long enough.

2) *What are the environmental issues you would become actively involved with in the Legislature? If elected, what committees would you hope to serve on?*

There are many ongoing threats I'm sure I would fight in the legislative arena. But my pro-active priority agenda would be:

- a) Establishing a system of Publicly Financed Elections
- b) Creating a Pollution Victim's Compensation Fund
- c) Establishing an Organic School Lunch Program
- d) repealing the Trout Stream Buffer rollback of HB-1426

I would like to serve on Ways and Means, Rules and Appropriations. Given that I'll be a freshman member of the Green Party caucus, I might be satisfied if I can get assigned to Education, Natural Resources & the Environment, Children & Youth and / or Health & Ecology.

3) *What environmental activities have you previously been involved with?*

For the past ten years, I have worked to recruit independent candidates and to build a Green political Party which puts ecological concerns at the center of its organizing.

As an officer of the Georgia Green Party, I have been involved in our party's work on the Pollution Victim's Compensation Fund and the Organic School Lunch program - - both being parts of our Priority Legislative Agenda. (Neither has yet been introduced. We are still in the coalition building phase). In our travels about the state, we've attended various rallies and hearings, educated our members and have consulted with various community activists and participated in their fights against proposed quarries, existing polluting industries, for the clean-up of superfund sites, against proposed roads, etc.

Before moving to the Mountains, I lived in Oglethorpe County for fourteen years, where I operated a fifty acre organic farm where we ran a tree replanting business, an historical renovation company and cultivated 7,000 linear feet of organic raised beds. These various enterprises provided employment for hundreds of people who lived for various lengths of time at the farm. I also worked in Athens during that time, where I owned and operated

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The Vegan Cafe and co-founded the Turtle Island Organic Food Cooperative. While a resident of Oglethorpe County, I worked for twelve years on the Athens Human Rights Festival Organizing Committee, and participated in fights against the Clarke County Incinerator and the U.Ga. Bio-Containment Research Center, established by the university to conduct genetic engineering research.

Prior to moving to Georgia in 1984, I lived for years in California where I participated with a Mother's group, a part of the Abalone Alliance fighting the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. I managed a water purification company in Los Angeles, educating the community about toxins in the water supply. I also attend medical school for a while where I studied the links between environmental pollution and health problems.

Issue Questions

4) *What is your position on the principle of allowing for legislative override of environmental regulations (as in HB-1182)? Why or why not?*

I oppose it. I believe that the legislature's role is to create a statutory framework within which the DNR and the other departments should operate. The role of the Assembly is not to micro-manage the bureaucracy or second guess it. If a Department adopts rules which are outside of their statutory authority, there are adequate means to redress such abuses in the courts. If rules are adopted which fulfill existing legislative intent, but which dissatisfy a Member, that Member is permitted to initiate legislation to refine the intention of the legislature for future rule-making. The Reaves bill was a cynical attempt to undermine hard fought environmental gains. If the principle of legislative override were a sound one, why then did Reaves not apply it to all Departmental regulations? Why was the DNR singled out for this oversight? The answer is clear. The legislation was not driven by a desire for sound public policy making but by the campaign contributions of Agri-business.

5) *How would you reduce the substantial environmental impacts if CAFO's (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations)? Who should bear the liability for the waste and pollution the animals cause?*

Our state platform opposes factory farming. I would back measures to support small scale family and owner-operated farms. In all cases the polluter should bear responsibility and liability for waste and pollution.

6) *What priority do you give to campaign finance reform?*

- *Do you support increased campaign contribution limits as in HB-1630?*
- *Do you support a voluntary system of public funding as in HB-1750?*

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- ***Would you require disclosure for conflicts of interest?***
- ***Do you support additional resources (staffing and funding) for the State Ethics Commission?***

Reclaiming our democratic institutions from the corporations is of the highest priority for me and for the Green Party. It is the reform, without which, no others are possible. Our state party platform supports a system of publicly financed elections. On HB-1750, I would support passage as this is modeled after the Public Campaign model we've already endorsed. I would like to see Teddy Lee have not only the resources, but also the authority to investigate Ethics violations. I would support a conflict disclosure requirement. I believe that the increased campaign contribution limits only exacerbate the threat that the existing campaign finance system poses to our democracy.

7) What protections should be afforded naturally functioning ecosystems in any resolution of the tri-state "water war"? What role should water conservation measures play?

I support measures to protect wetlands, stream and river corridors and aquifer recharge areas through the use of development buffers and other appropriate measures, especially a systematic effort to reduce and eliminate the toxins being discharged into our state's waterways. I support an aggressive water conservation effort which would include, public education to promote xeriscaping, the use of composting toilets and water efficient irrigation systems. I support seasonal outdoor watering restrictions and, as necessary, outdoor watering bans. I would condition the renewal of existing industrial water withdrawal permits on the implementation of aggressive water efficiency programs. I support the adoption of building codes, ordinances and statutes mandating water efficient appliances in new construction and retrofits.

8) What funding mechanism would you support for river basin management authorities such as the Lake Allatoona Preservation Authority (LAPA)? What level of funding do you consider appropriate?

I am unfamiliar with LAPA and would appreciate any education you might provide about this issue. In general I believe that we ought to tax the destructive activities to fund the solution, i.e., tax gas to fund pedestrian and bicycle facilities, tax pollution to fund the Pollution Victim's Compensation Fund, etc. So in theory, I could see establishing a mechanism where we would tax land disturbances to fund water way preservation activities. But as I said, I am unfamiliar, with the problems of Lake Allatoona (except in the most general terms). I was unable to locate the Authority's Charter on-line. Please reply with your briefing materials on this subject.

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9) *How would you support the no mining agreement for the Okefenokee that protects the Trail Ridge area and establishes the Okefenokee Education and Research Center?*

I believe it is outrageous that the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and Wilderness Area is being held hostage by DuPont who is blackmailing us for \$90 million in public money. I believe that there is no private property right to destroy such an important water resource which the people of Georgia are required to observe. Having said that, I would be willing to spend public money on establishing such an Education and Research Center. But I would urge that the state simply condemn this property, paying fair market value for the farmland. It is outrageous that we would subsidize such destructive behavior with this corporate welfare. Until and unless the state were to issue a mining permit, there exists no property right to the minerals, this deal proposes that the public buy from DuPont. We need to establish a system of assessing mineral extraction with a tax. Paying DuPont not to mine what they have no permit to mine is, in my opinion, a step in the wrong direction.

10) *Would you support several more years of additions to the EPD staff such as we saw this session?*

The sixty-five new positions recommended in the Barnes' 2001 FY Budget is a good start. I support building an EPD with sufficient staff and resources to enforce environmental standards. But more critical still is reshaping the statutory framework of Georgia's environmental regulations to switch the focus from permitting and managing, to preventing and eliminating pollution. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Compost must be more than a feel good slogan for home-owners on Earth Day. They must be the driving philosophy in state policy making, especially as it relates to Georgia industry.

11) *If elected, will you support funding for Governor Barnes' greenspace initiative by seeking a permanent, dedicated source of funding, rather than relying on surplus funds? What level of funding would you consider appropriate?*

I believe that this was a good use of \$30 million in sales tax surpluses. I would support a development impact fee on sprawling development to continue to fund the Community Greenspace Program established this past year. I would support a study to determine what funding level would be appropriate to this purpose. I believe that such a study should create an estimate of the costs of preserving all critical wetlands, stream and river corridors threatened by rapidly developing metropolitan regions. It should also look at the costs of preserving greenbelts to limit sprawl and contain development.

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12) Will you support GRTA funding requests and withholding of funding from uncooperative counties?

I was disappointed to see that the Governor's budget request did not support GRTA's initial funding request.

13) Do you support freeing motor fuel taxes for transit? What funding mechanism would you recommend for transit?

Yes. Our state platform calls for the use of this revenue, not just for transit, but also for bicycle and pedestrian facilities and for transportation programs to support the elderly and handicapped. I believe that our public transit systems should be funded by the fare box, the motor fuel tax, the motor fuel sales tax, Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, Transportation Enhancement Activities and Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act / Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century monies. I would also support creating a formula for the use of property tax revenues from parking lots for Capital Investments in Transit systems.

14) What authority or programs should the state have to require or encourage cooperation in planning by localities?

We could condition DCA approval of a County's Comprehensive Plans on the inclusion in those plans of an element describing cross county cooperation on cross county issues.

15) Should the state allow construction of the northern arc of the outer perimeter?

Absolutely not. We oppose the Second Perimeter in our state platform.

16) What stronger measures would you support to control land use adjacent to our streams?

I would support vegetative buffers in which tree cutting would be prohibited along rivers and streams. I would work to repeal the HB-1426 roll back of the trout stream buffer areas.

17) Would you support a deposit on beverage containers? How should the state reduce solid waste volume?

Yes. I do support a bottle bill. The Green Party is a member of the Zero Waste Campaign and supports the Coke - Take it Back! Campaign. I support an expanded role

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for DNR's Pollution Prevention Assistance Division.

18) Should businesses be able to shield pollution information from juries? Should polluters be compensated when required not to pollute?

Absolutely not. I support strong Right to Know provisions allowing a community to know about the toxins to which they are exposed. Under the Green Party's proposed Pollution Victim's Compensation Fund, the Fund would receive a dedicated tax on discharges reportable on the Toxic Release Inventory. So consequently, when a polluting industry finally reaches the zero discharge goals which this fund is designed to encourage, they would no longer be assessed this tax. So, yes, in a way, they would be compensated for not polluting.

19) Should utilities be required to offer energy efficiency programs to consumers? Should utilities be required to meet current pollution standards in all power plants that they do not retire?

Yes. I would support legislation to require that the Public Service Commission require least-cost energy investments. New utility investments should go to demand side efficiency and conservation projects before building any new generating capacity. It is cheaper, both financially and environmentally to invest in Nega-Watts, rather than Mega-Watts.

20) Do you support authorization of impact fees to support schools?

I support Sprawling Development Impact Fees that will support greenspace protection, and infrastructure development, including schools. I am less sure whether these fees ought to be assessed on projects that redevelop land in existing built areas, unless the density of the new development would require significant new infrastructure investments.

21) How should, or could, the state support the maintenance of the remaining undisturbed wild lands in Georgia, federal, state or private? How would you handle the issue of public access to these lands?

We oppose road-building in the National Forests and support the McKinney Bill to prohibit future commercial logging on these lands. I am very disturbed by the Deal bill which passed this past Congressional term which failed to de-couple the funding of rural school systems from the logging of our Forests. I would want to explore other mechanisms to correct these destructive economic incentives. I support the Heritage Fund and the Barnes Greenspace initiative of last session and would vote for funding through

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these programs for the state acquisition of appropriate private lands. Frankly, I'm more familiar with issues of toxins than those concerning wildlands and would appreciate any educational materials you might want to share.

I support non-motorized public access to public lands. I understand that the threats to our public lands come from commercial logging and road building, not from weekend hikers and recreational canoeing.

22) *Would you support legislation that would give local residents the right to vote on whether or not they want certain types of waste facilities, such as landfills, incinerators, material recovery facilities, etc., located in their communities? Why or why not?*

Yes. I believe that this might provide a check and balance on local governments which tend to take the easy way out by siting a waste disposal facility instead of asking for the behavior changes of the community and industries which would put us on a path to a zero waste goal.

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