

QUESTIONS

1. Since the Neuse River basin and reservoirs like Smith Creek are important for our drinking water, what state policies or funding would you support to strengthen stream buffers and help towns like Wake Forest work with nearby areas (Raleigh, Rolesville, Franklin County) to protect shared green spaces?

Response: I think the General Assembly's role here is threefold: (1) Ensure that the Department of Environmental Quality has authority to enact rules that protect and strengthen stream buffers; (2) Empower local governments to respond to local conditions; and (3) provide funding for local and regional projects to protect our drinking water. I recognize that these decisions require technical expertise, which is why I am committed to working with local officials, conservation organizations, landowners, and subject matter experts to identify practical and effective solutions.

Much of my work this past biennium has focused on fostering regional cooperation and securing funding for large regional initiatives. My office helped secure more than \$10 million last year for various local projects (excluding the funding for local transportation projects) and for nonprofit organizations. I'm committed to ensuring our conservation partners have a seat at the table for funding discussions in the coming biennium.

2. How can the state help towns and cities encourage or require low-impact development, like using permeable pavement, adding rain gardens, and preserving trees, while also keeping housing affordable and allowing for local flexibility?

Response: The state should create incentives and remove regulatory barriers rather than impose one-size-fits-all requirements. I support grant programs, technical assistance, and flexible regulatory tools that help local governments and developers adopt low-impact development practices. If a project incorporates features that reduce stormwater runoff or preserve natural resources, local governments should have options available that help offset costs. That approach can improve water quality and resilience while helping keep housing attainable for working families.

3. What state tax breaks, grants, or rules would you support to help communities redevelop underused brownfield or greyfield sites instead of clearing forests at the edge of town?

Response: The best development projects are the ones that make use of the infrastructure that we have already paid for and built. I am open to targeted grants, tax incentives, brownfield cleanup assistance, and other redevelopment tools when they produce measurable public benefits and make good fiscal sense. Any incentive program should be transparent, accountable, and designed to encourage productive reuse of existing sites while preserving green space and limiting the need for costly new infrastructure.

4. HB 225 was a bill that would permit Wake Forest and Rolesville to down-zone property without the consent of all landowners. This authority could provide municipalities with an additional tool to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Do you support this policy change and, if so, what would you do to see a similar bill pass and be signed into law?

Response: I support this policy change. I authored and filed HB 225, and I cosponsored its statewide counterpart, HB 24. I intend to refile the local bill in January. All of the House's downzoning bills—HB 24 and all the local bills like HB 225—stalled in the Judiciary 3 committee last cycle. I anticipate having a significant voice in the House Judiciary Committees next biennium, and I will work with House leadership to (1) identify why these bills did not move; (2) address any existing concerns; and (3) ensure that the legislation receives a meaningful hearing and consideration, including assignment to my committee if appropriate.