



Photo from the Daily Journal

There's a lot of buzz about New Jersey Governor Chris Christie as a possible GOP presidential candidate. As with the other candidates in the race, it seemed like a good idea to check into his positions on environmental issues.

The first thing that becomes clear is that he's enthusiastic about renewable energy and energy efficiency. He likes offshore wind generation but opposes offshore drilling and LNG facilities.

For instance, in terms of renewables, a [press release](#) last week says:

The Christie Administration has a proven record of commitment to securing the environmental and economic benefits of renewable energy in New Jersey. In addition to solar, the wind power movement is providing New Jersey with a unique opportunity to advance green energy as industry. New Jersey also is leveraging the state's tremendous resources with innovative technologies, enabling the state to increase its use of renewable energy sources while successfully attracting a range of companies here to advance an industry cluster that will create new jobs.

Second, Christie [accepts](#) the reality of anthropogenic climate change:

"I can't claim to fully understand all of this," he said. "Certainly not after just a few months of study. But when you have over 90 percent of the world's scientists who have studied this stating that climate change is occurring and that humans play a contributing role it's time to defer to the experts."

However, he pulled New Jersey out of RGGI, the regional carbon trading system, saying it was ineffective. He also [vetoed](#) legislation to ban fracking, but then imposed a one-year moratorium for more research on its safety.

Like his actions, his rhetoric seems sometimes to conflict, but at least at time, he's sounded very environmental:

“I’m very proud of the enormous work that’s been accomplished over the last 40 years in New Jersey and across the nation to protect and preserve our environment for future generations,” said Governor Christie. “From the Jersey Shore to the our state’s mountains and farms, New Jersey is home to precious environmental treasures that we are obligated to be good stewards of for our children and grandchildren. My administration takes this responsibility seriously and remains committed to protecting our environment every day.”

A bit of browsing suggests that Christie is not very popular with New Jersey environmentalists. But everything is relative. Christie seems at least arguably more favorable toward the environment than any of the current GOP candidates, given not only views about climate change and renewable energy but also his failure to embrace offshore drilling and fracking enthusiastically.

If he entered the race, Christie might appeal to voters who want a fiscal conservative but an environmental moderate. It’s a lot less clear that he would find support from the Tea Party.