

Reading time: 2 mins

Earth Action: Build Your Ballot

By [Gemma Alexander](#)OCT 28, 2022 [earth action, vote](#)

To honor Earth Day's 52 years of environmental action, Earth911 is presenting 52 Actions for the Earth. Each week through Earth Day 2023, we will share an action you can take to [invest in the Earth](#) and make your own life more sustainable. Individual action is necessary to stop climate change, but it is not enough. Industry and governments must get on board. Fortunately, individual Americans can influence the government through the elections process. This week, in preparation for the midterms, you can invest in the Earth by building your ballot.

Action: Build Your Ballot

Voter Turnout

The 2020 presidential election had the highest voter turnout so far this century, with [66.8% of citizens](#) 18 years and older voting. It still wasn't high compared to other democratic nations. The United States ranks [30 out of the 35 OECD countries](#) for voter turnout. We do even worse during midterm elections, when turnout [drops by about a third](#).

There are [many reasons](#) people don't vote, from voter suppression laws that reduce eligibility or that make registering difficult to the logistical challenges of in-person voting. And sadly, many Americans don't believe that their vote can

What Do You Think?

Are you considering moving because of climate change?

- No
- Yes
- I'm researching my options to decide

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make a difference. As many as [15% of registered voters](#) didn't vote in the 2016 presidential election for that reason. But voting is still a powerful tool to drive change, and a single vote [can make a difference](#).

Midterms Matter

The president of the United States holds arguably the most important elected position in the world. But that doesn't mean midterm elections are unimportant, especially for environmentally minded voters. Anyone who makes policy has an opportunity to support the environment. Midterm elections fill many federal roles, while local races determine things like schools, zoning, tree ordinances, and other issues with immediate environmental impacts.

Build Your Ballot

Hopefully, you are already [registered to vote](#), but if you aren't, it might not be too late.

This week, do some research and planning ahead of the election. Start by [confirming that you are registered](#) to vote. Find your [polling place](#) and make a plan for getting there on election day. Some states can have long lines, so clear your calendar now. You might be able to sign up to [vote by mail](#) instead. The website [Howto.vote](#) can help you figure out the voting process in your state.

Once you know how to vote, you need to decide what your vote will be. Voting unprepared could result in casting your ballot in favor of candidates who don't align with your civic and environmental values. Use the Skimm's [online tool](#) to see what will be on your ballot. Before November 8, set aside some time to look up the candidates on your ballot (even for "little" races like the school board). Google "green voter guide" + your state or county to see if any environmental organizations have evaluated local candidates' eco-credentials. Check out the [League of Conservation Voters](#) scorecard and endorsements for national races. Taking time to build your ballot before election day will ensure that you make the most of your vote.

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By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).

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