

TO THE POINT

I've been an environmental justice activist for over a decade. When I was 15 years old, I started supporting small farmers, as a way to stand up against factory farms. I've worked on the coast of NC repairing hurricane damaged homes. And I've been in the fight against big fossil fuel polluter, Duke Energy; but the fight for environmental justice isn't over.

WHY DURHAM SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD)

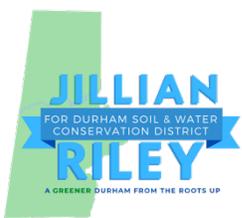
Right now, Durham doesn't have an elected official with a background in environmental justice. As an activist, I know how crucial it is to have an advocate at the local level. As your Board Supervisor, I will be that elected official who advocates for environmental justice.

JILLIAN'S STORY

My grandad grew up on an oil rig camp during the 1940s and his father, my great-grandad, died of an accident on the rigs due to poor labor practices. My grandad spent his childhood hunting squirrels for food but eventually climbed out of poverty by working in the big oil and fracked gas business. Now we know the irreversible damages that come with this work. I began working as an environmental justice organizer at the age of 15 as a way to pay homage to my grandad's childhood and as a form of reparations for the damage he contributed as an adult. As a vegan, I started a club to raise money for local farmers using humane practices as a way to stand up against factory farms. I later began working on the coast of rural NC managing a home repair program for elderly and disabled veterans whose homes were damaged from hurricanes. Most recently, I worked for the Sierra Club and partnered with communities all across the state to fight for clean water, clean air, renewable energy, and successfully forced Duke Energy to clean up toxic coal ash. Lastly, I am an Associate Supervisor on the SWCD. Because of my family's history, I have dedicated my life's work to advocating for environmental justice for all people.

PRIORITY 1: SUSTAINABILITY IN SCHOOLS

As a Board Supervisor, I will integrate environmental education opportunities for students and conservation projects to increase the education budget in Durham for teachers. As an example, there was a recently completed stormwater restoration project at Southern High School. The water runoff from the school's property leads into the Chunky Pipe Creek, which flows into the Little Lick Creek and leads into Falls Lake. Through the Little Lick Creek Local Watershed Plan, water reuse ponds were built on the school's property. These ponds provide a natural water source, reducing their dependency on potable water and saving the school district \$15,000 annually. Currently, the Durham SWCD is beginning a similar project at Riverside High School. I will actively support the completion of this project, and future projects, that put money back into schools while also conserving our natural resources. Building off my position as Board Chair of Crayons2Calculators, I will collaborate with DPS and the Durham Board of Education to further develop cost-saving measures.



PRIORITY 2: INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE

We need to support our Durham farmers with the most innovative agricultural trends. Currently, industrial hemp is leading the nation in economic opportunities and environmental conservation. Hemp is used as food, CBD oil, and fibers for clothing. Recent studies show that hemp can help prevent soil erosion and absorb Co2 emission, therefore improving the overall health of air, water, and soil quality. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Customer Services has supported new hemp farms in NC's Pilot Program under the U.S. Congressional Agricultural Act of 2014. As a Board Supervisor, I will work to support current and new hemp farmers. In particular, I will bring more attention to the racial discrimination that is currently preventing farmers of color from accessing hemp licensures. This is an innovative economic opportunity and I'll make sure that all farmers have the tools needed to start their new business ventures and build momentum towards marijuana legalization, an important criminal justice reform initiative.

PRIORITY 3: PROTECT CLEAN WATER

The Durham SWCD has the duty of making sure all residents have clean water for drinking, cooking, showering, and agricultural use. Stream and stormwater runoff restoration projects are a big component of this work. These projects reduce high nitrogen and phosphorus levels from entering into our water sources, which are Little Michie and Little River Reservoir located in northern Durham. I have worked with communities across the state to advocate for clean water through protests and speaking at statewide meetings held by the Department of Environmental Quality and the Utilities Commission. As a candidate, I have proudly signed the No Toxic Money Pledge. Dominion Energy had proposed a pipeline that would have gone through the American Tobacco Trails, but they have now receded that plan. I submitted an op-ed in opposition to the pipeline and will continue speaking out against proposed projects by the fossil fuel industry for both environmental justice and conservation concerns.

ABOUT SOIL AND WATER PROGRAMS

The top cost share and grant programs are the Community Conservation Assistance Program, Agricultural Cost Share Assistance Program, Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program, and Ag Water Resources Assistance Program. To apply for these programs, an applicant must know which staff person to call to set up an in-person assessment before they officially apply. This process is not transparent. Many farmers do not know how to apply, and it can feel like an insider's game. As an organizer, I have the skills to build relationships and outreach to farmers. I've spoken with farmers who did not know we provide grant assistance. I have spoken with a current Board Supervisor about updating the website to create a tab for grant information, including an online form so farmers can easily begin the application process. These adjustments will be a huge step in making sure the Durham SWCD programs are transparent and equitable. I will work with the staff to make these changes in a realistic and socially conscious manner.