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2016 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Candidate Name: Aravella Simotas

Office Sought (district if applicable): Assembly

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1. Please share your accomplishments or experiences that indicate your commitment to advancing a pro-environment agenda. These experiences may be professional or personal.

Since I first took office, I have been dedicated to protecting our environment and supporting legislation to combat climate change, preserve our natural resources, and reduce New Yorkers' exposure to harmful pollutants. As a member of the Assembly's Energy Committee, I have fought to pass measures that will incentivize the use of clean energy technology in our state. I am proud that my proposal to provide tax exemptions for commercial fuel cell general systems was enacted as part of this year's state budget. By removing sales tax burdens, this measure will make fuel cell technology more affordable and help to reduce our reliance on foreign oil, create green jobs, and move New York closer to meeting our clean energy goals. Furthermore, I have co-sponsored the Renewable Energy Development and Jobs Act, legislation that would expand the use of sustainable energy, curb carbon emissions, and improve air quality in our communities. I have also authored a bill to protect our children from hazardous substances by prohibiting toxic toys in day care facilities and co-sponsored legislation to increase regulation of dangerous chemicals in children's products. Additionally, I have worked to increase state funding for the Environmental Protection Fund, State Parks, clean water infrastructure, and energy-efficient public transportation.

Please indicate your level of commitment to, and if applicable your recent personal and professional activity with respect to, the following issues:

(To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV's 2016 State Policy Agenda](#))

2. Ensuring adequate funding for the environmental agencies and programs

Preserving our state's natural habitats and native species is one of our most important public duties. I was proud to work with my colleagues to pass a budget that increased funding for the Environmental Protection Fund by \$123 million to reach a historic level of \$300 million. In the Assembly, I will continue to fight to provide sufficient funding to environmental programs to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, control invasive species, enhance clean water infrastructure, and prevent the contamination of our natural resources.

3. Addressing the causes and effects of climate change (e.g., clean energy and emission controls)

Combatting climate change is a critical concern for our state, which is why I have consistently supported initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase energy efficiency. I have introduced legislation to incentivize the use of clean energy technology by providing tax exemptions for commercial fuel cell generating systems and co-sponsored bills to encourage production of sustainable energy sources, including hydrogen and solar. As a member of the Assembly's Energy Committee, I am dedicated to enacting policies that will help New York reach our clean energy goals and become a national leader in the development of green technology.

4. Protecting the health of New Yorkers and their communities (e.g., toxics, air quality, food quality and security)

Improving public health is a top priority for me. I am the primary sponsor of a bill to ban toxic toys from day care centers and a co-sponsor of legislation to regulate hazardous substances in children's products. I am also a co-sponsor of legislation that would require labeling of genetically modified foods. I will continue to fight to protect New Yorkers from dangerous chemicals and improve the quality of our air, water and food supplies.

5. Conserving and protecting natural resources (e.g., water, open spaces, habitat, organic recycling)

It is essential that we protect our state's natural resources and safeguard the air we breathe and water we drink from harmful pollutants. I was proud to support a ban on hydraulic fracturing in New York and I will continue to work toward solutions that will prevent groundwater contamination and conserve our natural habitats.

6. Investing in better, smarter infrastructure (e.g., transportation, electrical grid, green infrastructure, smart growth, rail transport of crude oil)

Revitalizing and modernizing our state's infrastructure is vital to meeting our environmental goals. In the Assembly, I am the primary sponsor of legislation that would establish the Commission on the Infrastructure of New York State to ensure our infrastructure is developed and maintained in a sustainable manner that protects public safety. I will continue to fight to increase state investment in our infrastructure needs and support the design and implementation of innovative green infrastructure practices.