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**2016 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire**

**Campaign Contact Information**

Candidate Name: **FRED W. THIELE, JR.**
Office Sought (district if applicable): **NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY- DISTRICT 1**

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

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| Growing up on the East End of Long Island, I have come to value and treasure our natural environment and the resources with which we have been blessed. I think I have had a much greater appreciation for a clean and productive environment, because the economy of the East End is so dependent upon having clean water to fish and swim in, and beautiful beaches and open spaces to attract tourists. My upbringing has given me a far greater understanding of our environment and threats to it, and is perhaps why I value my role as a member of the State Assembly’s Environmental Conservation Committee so much.My greatest accomplishment in my career has been the creation of the Peconic Bay Community Protection Fund (CPF) in 1999. Through this 2 percent real estate transfer tax, the East End of Long Island has raised over $1 billion to preserve over 10,000 acres of some of the most ecologically important and sensitive lands in all of New York State. Last year, legislation I sponsored was signed into law which will allow the East End Towns to use up to 20 percent of their annual CPF revenues on water quality improvement projects. This, if approved by voters in the November election, will establish a local dedicated funding source through 2050 to address the nitrogen crisis Long Island is faced with.I have also been instrumental in the designation of the Peconic Bay National Estuary Program, local farmland protection initiatives, and large scale water quality and environmental bond act projects on the East End. I will continue to grow my accomplishment related to protecting and restoring our state’s water quality and marine, grassland, and forest habitats, protect our waters and land ecosystems from invasive species, reduce greenhouse gases emission, and reduce toxic chemicals and pesticides from entering our environment.  |

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](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/StatewideAgenda2016-FINAL-lowres.pdf))

1. **Ensuring adequate funding for the environmental agencies and programs**

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| Over the past several years, I have consistently fought for increasing our State’s Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). Our efforts were incredibly successful this year in increasing the State’s EPF to $300 million in the 2016-17 State Budget. We have come a long way when just four short years ago, when our EPF was funded at less than half of what it is today. I anticipate ensuring that we further grow our EPF and make up for lost time. I have also fought hard to ensure our State Departments who charged with protecting our environment and natural resources, like the State Department of Environmental Conservation and State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, have the staff and resources they need to fulfill their mission. Unfortunately, over the years we have seen these Departments trying to do more with less, and when it comes to protecting our State’s environmental resources, that is clearly unacceptable. I have secured additional Legislative State funding for DEC’s operation of the Peconic Estuary Program and Shellfish Sanitation Program to make up for departmental cuts. Throughout my years in public service, I have advocated for additional train service for the East End and spearheaded efforts to improve mass and public transportation. I sponsor State legislation, A.5474-B, which would create the Peconic Bay Regional Transportation Council to study the impacts of traffic congestion and ultimately implement measures to improve our regional public transit system. I have also initiated a proposal to institute regular shuttle trains on both the South and North Forks. In fact, the State Legislature included $37.2 million in the 2015 MTA Capital Plan to purchase smaller diesel equipment, yet, to date, the MTA has not taken any steps to implement the diesel scoot service. In the meantime, limited mass transit service is choking our local roads with traffic. I support our State’s focus on water quality infrastructure. I am working closely with the State and other regional partners on developing the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan, which will likely detail a much greater needed for clean water infrastructure on Long Island. I have also amended my Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund legislation, which has raised over $1 billion for land preservation, to allow the East End to use up to 20% of annual revenues on water quality projects, such as wastewater infrastructure. |

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

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| Living on the East End of Long Island for my entire life, I know what it’s like to be completely surrounded by water, completely vulnerable to coastal storms, sea level rise, and a changing climate, and how it affects our natural resources. In 2014, legislation I sponsored, the “Community Risk Resiliency Act” was signed into law as Chapter 355 of the Laws of 2014. I also sponsor the “Coastal Risk Management Zone Protection Act”, (A.7140) to protect our coastline against coastal hazards. As a member of the Assembly’s Environmental Conservation Committee, I have always supported the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and legislation which seeks to expand the use of clean, green and renewable energy sources, and will continue to do so. By focusing on renewable energy, we can grow our economy, crate jobs, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.  |

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

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| I sponsor several pieces of legislation which seek to protect the health of New Yorkers, including but not limited to: A.5612-A which seeks to ensure that children’s products are safe for our kids and has passed the Assembly, A.5844-A which would create stricter standards for lamps containing mercury and has passed the Assembly, A.6859 which would require hazardous wastes produced from oil and natural gas activities to be subject to the requirements for treatment of hazardous wastes.I support efforts to improve our State’s air quality such as the reduction of diesel engine emission and I support the use of biofuels and ultra-low sulfur home heating oil and gases. Representing a district where farmland preservation is of utmost importance, I have consistently supported efforts to preserve farmland and to ensure those lands are actively farmed. Most notably, I have been working with the municipalities in my district through implementation of the Community Preservation Fund to place draft restrictive easements which would ensure that our preserved farmland is farmed and in food production.. I also sponsor A.167 which would provide a real property tax exemption for protected agricultural land used for food production., and support FreshConnect programs and farm-to-table initiatives. |

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

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| As the lead sponsor of State legislation enabling designation of the Peconic Bay National Estuary Program, I have been an active partner in the Peconic Estuary Program’s implementation of their Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for over 20 years. I have worked to secure additional State program aid and have developed new sustainable funding mechanisms for the program through the Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund. I have also supported out other State estuary and regional ecosystem based watershed programs including the Long Island Sound Study, South Shore Estuary Reserve, the Hudson River Estuary Program.The Landowner Incentive Program is a great tool to help protect and restore natural habitats, however, I feel quite strongly that that program, in addition to our forest preservation and invasive species management efforts, must be expanded. Just recently I have been on the forefront of Long Island’s battle with the invasive Southern Pine Beetle, spearheading efforts to secure the necessary state fudging to implement a comprehensive eradication effort. I support our State’s focus on water quality infrastructure. I am working closely with the State and other regional partners on developing the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan, which will likely detail a much greater needed for clean water infrastructure on Long Island. I have also amended my Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund legislation, which has raised over $1 billion for land preservation, to allow the East End to use up to 20% of annual revenues on water quality projects, such as wastewater infrastructure. I have also worked very closely to help build and fund the Clean Water Center at Stony Brook University which has been tasked at evaluating effective and affordable wastewater treatment systems with enhanced nitrogen removing capabilities. As one of the original sponsors of the "Sewage Pollution Right to Know Act" back in 2012 when it was signed into law, I support full implementation.  |

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

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| I have been a huge proponent of ensuring the utilization of complete street design and smart growth practices. I have worked closely with our regional NYSDOT engineers and cycling groups to ensure installation of and markings for new bike lanes. I have also lead the charge to develop and fund several new traffic calming projects in Sag Harbor, East Hampton and Bridgehampton, including but not limited to new roundabouts and lighted crosswalks. I have introduced several pieces of legislation to allow municipalities such as the Village of East Hampton, Village of Sag Harbor (A.4264) and Town of East Hampton (A.4263) to lower speed limits. I have also worked with the DOT request studies and investigations of problematic intersections and have been able to secure new crosswalks and new traffic signals to improve traffic flow and safety. I sponsor legislation to allow for the creation of underground utility districts to improve the reliability and resiliency of our electrical grid system, especially in the wake of climate change, sea level rise and coastal storms. I have also advocated for additional train service for the East End and spearheaded efforts to improve mass and public transportation. I sponsor State legislation, A.5474-B, which would create the Peconic Bay Regional Transportation Council to study the impacts of traffic congestion and ultimately implement measures to improve our regional public transit system. I have also initiated a proposal to institute regular shuttle trains on both the South and North Forks. In fact, the State Legislature included $37.2 million in the 2015 MTA Capital Plan to purchase smaller diesel equipment, yet, to date; the MTA has not taken any steps to implement the diesel scoot service.  |