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## 2016 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire

### CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Candidate Name: Jose Peralta

Office Sought (district if applicable): New York State Senate, District 13

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

**As discussed below, I am a longtime supporter of pro-environment efforts from several unique and identifiable standpoints. Whether promoting consumer protection through support of the Child Products Safety Act, or encouraging the growth of renewable energies such as offshore wind, the environment has always been of the utmost importance in my calculus of political considerations.**

**While I am encouraged by recent efforts by the State to increase funding to initiatives such as the Environmental Protection Fund and the Water Infrastructure Act, it continues to be the case that the State faces real challenges in the areas of water quality (as evidenced by the case of Hoosick Falls) and an aging energy infrastructure. We must do more as elected officials to create sustainable energies moving forward that offer access to clean and safe natural resources, and we must also do more to understand where current problems relative to health and safety exist.**

**Additionally, as the Ranking Member of the State Senate’s Labor Committee, I would be remiss not to mention the growing importance of so-called ‘green jobs’ in New York State. I am a firm supporter of growing programs that will encourage jobs related to clean energy, and I truly believe these scenarios present a ‘win-win’ situation for New York. The growth of ‘green jobs’ means a great boost to our ailing Upstate economy, while also securing New York’s environment for years to come.**

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](#))

Ensuring adequate funding for the environmental agencies and programs

As part of this year’s Budget process, I was a strong advocate in support of the Governor’s executive proposal of \$300 million in dedicated funding for the State’s Environmental Protection Fund. While I believe the Fund is essential in protecting every aspect of New York’s environment and natural resources, I am especially proud of my support for EPF funding that will touch those residing in urban areas. Protecting the environment is important all across New York, not just in more rural areas located Upstate. Funding for municipal parks and waterfront revitalization means an opportunity for all New Yorkers, including those living in New York City, to connect with the environment around them.

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

I am proud of my continued advocacy on the area of climate change. While New York is one piece in a much larger puzzle, there is no question that the State should aim to meet its Reforming Energy Vision plan goals by 2030, including almost a 25% reduction in energy consumption, and the growth of renewable energy use to 50% of energies consumed within the State. I continue to believe that New York is perfectly suited to encourage the development of renewable energy, and I recently joined with my colleagues in a letter to Governor Cuomo, advocating for the expansion of offshore wind energy development. Additionally, I believe the State must meet its inherent commitments that stem from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Simply put, funding for RGGI should stay with RGGI programs that promote

the increased use of renewables, as well other environmentally-sound initiatives. Finally, I am proud to support new initiatives that aim to reduce the State's carbon footprint, including exciting new programs such as consumer rebates for the purchase of zero-emissions vehicles, as well as transforming the Upstate energy economy from traditionally coal-based fuels to new, renewable energy production that safeguards the environment and creates and retains jobs for New Yorkers.

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

In the past and currently, I have supported legislation that aims to protect the health and safety of New Yorkers from the standpoint of environmental harms. As you know, I have been a strong supporter of the Child Safe Products Act – at the most stringent level possible to eliminate the presence of dangerous chemicals and compounds from products that children interact with, sometimes on a daily basis. Additionally, I have cosponsored environmental protection legislation on a wide range of consumer issues, including bills aimed at eliminating dangerous 'microbeads' from personal care products sold in New York State.

Revelations in Flint, Michigan, and closer to home in Hoosick Falls, New York, demonstrate the dire need for improvements to the State's water infrastructure. While I certainly supported, and will continue to support increased funding for the New York State Water Infrastructure Act this year, we must also take steps to understand how contamination of the State's water sources is occurring and work diligently to eliminate these issues before additional New Yorkers become sick. As public servants, we owe New Yorkers the right to access clean water without fear that it contains unsafe toxins.

As stated previously, I am glad to support programs aimed at promoting clean air, including policy that addresses emissions from vehicles and industrial centers across the State. Commercial actors and everyday citizens must work together to reduce their impact on the State's air quality.

On the agricultural front, I am proud to support sustainable farming efforts throughout the State, and particularly important to many of my own constituents, I am supportive of efforts to bring farm fresh foods to communities that experience issues with access to these healthy options. Additionally, I am the Senate sponsor of a bill that would waive licensing fees for

establishments that serve as ‘kitchen incubators’ for startup businesses in the culinary sector; these facilities allow market entrants access for large scale kitchens that they would otherwise be unable to afford upon first opening a brick-and-mortar establishment. For many New Yorkers, these market entrants represent access to the aforementioned farm fresh produce and foods that are often absent from other stores in their neighborhoods.

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

I am a longtime supporter of conserving and protecting New York’s rich natural resources, in all corners of our Great State. It is my belief that the State’s parklands, open spaces, and overall wildlife habitats must be preserved, as they are truly a treasure. Also, in more urban areas of the State, parkland is all the more scarce and must be protected against alienation and redevelopment. For New Yorkers residing in urban areas, the State’s more rural parklands also provide an important place which to retreat, and reconnect with nature. Regarding organic recycling programs, I am a firm supporter of initiatives to increase composting efforts, and believe that these efforts are especially important in the State’s large, urban areas.

As stated above, I believe that the State’s water resources must be safeguarded, from the standpoints of environmental integrity, as well as public health. Where some of the State’s water supply continues to recover from past exposure to industrial pollutants, notably in the Hudson River and Great Lakes regions, the State must continue to fund programs to promote cleanup, as well as encourage private actors to pay for their responsibility in degrading the quality of water present near formerly-operated, and currently operated facilities.

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

In New York, our aging infrastructure needs a comprehensive overhaul, and we also desperately need the shot-in-the-arm that this long overdue work will give our local economy. We must do whatever we can to slow climate change by focusing on green development and mass transit. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy and currently, I have been at the forefront of the fight for green infrastructure investment and I will continue to push to ensure that this state does not fall behind. I feel encouraged by the development of the ‘green economy’ that I am seeing in New York, and I am hopeful that we can continue to foster growth of these efforts. A smarter infrastructure certainly means the implementation of new technologies such as ‘SmartGrid’ efforts to update our State’s electrical grid, to the extent that this and other new technologies are practicable. To this end, I am pleased to see efforts underway at State agencies such as the New York

Power Authority and NYSERDA. I am also supportive of efforts to continue the growth of mass transit, not only in New York City, but across New York State. Relative to the City, I am among the first members of the Legislature to have endorsed the 'Move NY' plan for a redesign of the City's transportation infrastructure. By strengthening our mass transit Downstate, we can reduce the number of cars on the road and promote cleaner air and health benefits for the Tri-State Area's millions of residents.

