



30 Broad Street – 30th Floor
New York, NY 10004
212-361-6350
politics@nylcv.org
www.nylcv.org

2016 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Candidate Name: Kevin A. Cahill

Office Sought (district if applicable): New York State Assembly – 103rd District

Website: www.kevincahillny.com

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

I am a past recipient of the Legislator of the Year award by the Environmental Planning Lobby. That award was recognition that my legislative record is uniformly and regularly consistent with the highest standards of review by environmental advocacy groups.

In addition to supporting with my votes and co-sponsorship of most of the measures considered by the Assembly to protect our land, air and water, I authored several key energy measures specifically to address climate change, improve the health of New Yorkers and to create sustainable jobs and opportunities. My work with power plant siting includes significantly increasing the funds available for community based intervenors and to encourage renewable power producing resources. I created the first permanent New York State Energy Planning process, the Green Jobs/Green New York program and the statutory authorization for the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Further, I am a staunch opponent of high-volume hydraulic fracturing in New York.

I consistently supported every fracking ban and moratorium that has come before the Assembly for a vote. Common sense prevailed when the Governor finally followed the Assembly's lead in 2014 and signed an executive order banning high-volume hydraulic fracturing in New York.

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

I have continuously joined with like-minded legislators in authoring letters to the Governor and the Assembly Speaker urging full funding for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). I am proud to report that the 2016-17 state budget contains over \$1.4 billion for environmental agencies and programs, including \$300 million for the EPF, the highest funding level to date.

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

\$24 million of the EPF appropriation will be used to directly fund and carry out initiatives under the Climate Change Action Plan, which is being developed by the Assembly Climate Change Work Group, of which I am a member of. Included in the spending plan is \$14 million for the newly established Climate Smart Communities Program to fund clean vehicle, flood mitigation and coastal resiliency measures as well as \$1 million for greenhouse gas management outside the power sector.

I am the sponsor of A.8372, which establishes a tax on carbon-based fuels to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions causing anthropogenic climate change.

In addition, the siting law that I was primarily responsible for set up graduated standards for power plants depending on their environmental impact and carbon footprint, with priority given to those plants that used renewable resources and polluted the least.

I supported the Public Service Commission authorization to extend the NY Sun program, which provides incentives to residential and non-residential electric customers who install solar generating equipment. The commitment is set at \$960 million between 2016 and 2023.

Although the Legislature does not have control over the RPS funds, I am a co-sponsor of A.6776 (Englebright) (NY Sun Act), which would require the Public Service Commission to establish annual statewide expenditures of \$150 million to support solar until 2024. I have also long been an advocate for legislative input and limited control over RPS and SBC resources to assure that they are being expended and for purposes consistent with the authorization to impose them. The Assembly passed this measure in 2013. Unfortunately, the bill died in the Senate.

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

This year's budget included a \$200 million funding increase for water infrastructure improvement projects through the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act established in 2015 to help expand the state's ability to provide grants to municipalities who need to upgrade, repair or improve their water treatment facilities and delivery systems.

In 2014, I supported the Assembly's passage of A.6558-A (Sweeney) to require certain environmental funding programs, including the State's drinking water and wastewater revolving loan funds, to include consideration of the effects of climate risk including sea level rise, storm surges and flooding. This bill was signed into law in 2014.

As you know, the ability of the State of New York to regulate certain types of transport, such as large vessels, is sometimes limited by federal law. Cognizant of those restrictions, the Assembly continues to take the lead in doing what we can. I have been and remain supportive of the Assembly's action to regulate diesel-powered off road vehicles, passing the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) – for which I was a multi-sponsor which required the use of ultra low sulfur diesel and the use of best available retrofit technologies for state and state-contracted vehicles. I am also supportive of legislation that includes all sources of emissions in measurements of air quality, not just stationary sources.

Additionally, I have continuously supported A.5612-A (Englebright) that would restrict the use of harmful chemicals in children's products and prohibit the sale of products containing the most harmful chemicals. This bill has passed the Assembly every year since 2012.

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

As a representative whose district includes significant parts of the Catskill Park, I recognize the importance of protecting the world class open space and forest preserves New York provides. Assuring sustainable local economies in the Catskill Region is essential to maintaining these long standing and largely successful rules, regulations and plans. I am proud of the leadership that the Assembly provides in this regard and remain confident that it will continue.

The final budget included \$14 million for a municipal recycling program that includes an organic recycling equipment component. My colleagues and I further successfully advocated for a \$40 million allotment for open space preservation and a \$20 million appropriation for farmland protection in the Hudson Valley and beyond.

Moreover, the final EPF budget contained several water initiatives including: \$20 million for water quality improvement projects; \$27 million for non-point source pollution control and \$1.5 million for water testing.

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

I introduced A.2371 ("New York Grid Modernization Act"), which takes a comprehensive approach to fixing problems associated with NY's aging infrastructure, including: upgrading/repairing high voltage transmission lines, repairing/burying distribution lines to guard against weather related disruptions, workforce development programs, the usage of smart technologies that more accurately identify energy consumption practices, and prohibiting utilities from raising rates more than 2.5% in order to fund their grid modernization programs.

Additionally, I authored A.1285, which authorizes certain municipalities to individually or collectively participate in community-wide energy aggregation program where they can request bids, select an energy service provider, install energy efficiency measures and develop local renewable energy facilities to provide electric and/or gas supply services, including gas efficiency and renewable heating technologies to participating customers. Community Choice Aggregation programs can also set aside or raise funds to jump-start local wind, solar, biogas, or geothermal generation, and to install back-up storage and create microgrids – all measures that will reduce community vulnerability to power outages during major storms. Further, this bill encourages local power production, which in turn will lead to more local jobs. In sum, this bill allows communities to create a balanced portfolio that includes measures to reduce electricity usage and build local ("distributed") clean energy generation.

In 2009, I was a chief proponent and cosponsor of the Green Jobs-Green NY Act and Fund, which became law (Chapter 487 of the Laws of 2009). The goal of this bill was to make one million New York homes, businesses, and not-for-profits more energy efficient while creating thousands of new jobs over a five year period. The law requires NYSERDA to establish innovative financing mechanisms, such as on-bill financing, to allow consumers to pay for energy saving improvements. This legislation provided \$112 million in capital funding from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative with an emphasis on residential retrofits and establishing a green workforce.

The Legislature enacted Chapter 433 of the Laws of 2010 (the “State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act”) – a bill that I cosponsored – to encourage development to be located near existing infrastructure by prohibiting certain state agencies from financing any public infrastructure project that does not meet certain criteria. Those criteria include protecting the State’s natural resources, fostering mixed land uses and compact development, downtown revitalization, brownfield development, and affordability of housing in proximity to places of employment, recreation and commercial development.

Locally, I secured \$1 million in funding for the expansion of the Ulster County Rail Trail system of biking and walking paths. I was instrumental in the initial funding for the Walkway Over The Hudson and remain a strong supporter of increased state funding in order to keep the attraction free for public usage.

Regarding statewide initiatives, in an effort to encourage good planning in order to help individuals achieve the health benefits associated with active forms of transportation, as well as to achieve a cleaner, greener transportation system to reduce traffic congestion and auto-related air pollution, the Legislature enacted legislation, of which I was a multi-sponsor (Chapter 398 of the Laws of 2011,) calling for the consideration of “complete street” design principles in various transportation projects.

Chapter 398 requires Department of Transportation (DOT), or the agency with project jurisdiction, to consider the convenient access and mobility on the road network by all users of all ages through the use of complete street design features in planning, design, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of transportation projects which are undertaken by DOT or which receive both federal and State funding and are subject to DOT oversight. It exempts resurfacing, maintenance and pavement recycling projects, and does not apply if it has been determined and set forth in publicly available documents that bicyclist and pedestrian use is prohibited, or cost is disproportionate to need, or there is a demonstrated lack of need, or use of design features would adversely impact safety.