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2017 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire   
for New York City Candidates

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the New York League of Conservation Voters Questionnaire.

The New York League of Conservation Voters is the only non-partisan statewide environmental organization in New York that fights for clean water, clean air, renewable energy and open space through political action. This questionnaire is designed to elicit your views regarding what environmental, public health, clean energy and transit and environmental justice groups consider to be the most important issues of the day. Responses may inform NYLCV’s educational and legislative programs and actions NYLCV takes in the election cycle.

Responses should be considered public. Although NYLCV may choose not to publicize responses to every question, verbatim responses may be reproduced and distributed publicly. If so, your responses may be shortened, if necessary, but will not be edited in substantive ways. If you choose to refer us to a position paper or website, please indicate exactly what text you would like us to cite. For candidates choosing not to respond to the questionnaire, NYLCV will note as much in its public materials.

NYLCV and its partners in the environmental policy arena believe that New York’s voters are determined to make the environment a voting issue this year. Candidate positions on issues such as protecting public health, building a clean energy future, and mitigating climate change will help voters decide how to cast their ballots this election cycle. This questionnaire is one of the primary ways the public will get this information.

Here are a few guidelines:

* Questionnaires are due **Friday, May 19**
  + The completed questionnaire is mandatory for endorsement consideration and must be submitted via e-mail as a Microsoft Word file to: [politics@nylcv.org](mailto:politics@nylcv.org)
  + Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg ([jklainberg@nylcv.org](mailto:jklainberg@nylcv.org))
* To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV’s 2014-18 NYC Policy Agenda](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NYC_Agenda_FINAL.pdf)
* After receipt of the completed questionnaire, candidates will be invited to participate in a formal interview with our Chapter Board
* All candidate endorsements will be made by the state board on July 26, 2017

**Campaign Contact Information**

Candidate Name: Gale A. Brewer  
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Scheduler’s name and email: n/a

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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

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| 1. Solid Waste Advisory Board (SWAB) One way my office tackles issues of sustainability and the environment is through the BP's role in overseeing and appointing members to the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board.  The Manhattan SWAB is dedicated to increasing recycling, reducing, solid waste and advancing solid waste policy in NYC. Since taking office we have provided SWAB with additional resources, technical support and membership.  Our recruitment efforts yielded over 100 interested applicants therefore we increased the SWAB appointed membership from 25 to 35.  We increased SWAB exposure not only through our recruitment efforts but also we supported the creation of increased web-presence with a new website and social media platform. : <http://www.manhattanswab.org/> This year I helped SWAB launch its newest grant program to fund Reuse and Repair initiatives.  The goal of the grant is to support New York City in reusing, repairing, and refurbishing 100% of all discarded products that can be reused in some capacity, with the balance being recycled hence diverted from landfill.  My office fundraising assistance has helped SWAB not only raise the funds for the new Reuse and Repair programs but has also increased funds available to make composting grants available to not only Manhattan recipients but citywide this is how much the interest has grown.  Since its inception in 2011 the program has granted over $135,457 to 180 groups to undertake composting projects in their neighborhoods in all five boroughs.  My work in the City Council help spread organics collection throughout public schools in the Upper West Side and this program has now been scaled and adopted citywide.  Since the recycling of organic materials is a natural process, that if properly managed will provide compost, a natural soil amendment, I believe on-site composting systems can deliver many environmental benefits. Compost increases the nutrient content and moisture retention of soil and can also eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers. Diverting compost from landfills prevents the production of methane gas, a potent greenhouse gas, and the formulation of leachate from landfills. Additionally, composting can offer economic benefits, and it helps reduce RATS too.  2. Sponsored a resolution at Manhattan Borough Board to **support Passive House** building energy standards; passed unanimously.  3. Wrote and produced [How Our Gardens Grow](http://bit.ly/gardenreport), a report on **expanding urban gardens, farms, and other agriculture programs in schools, senior centers, and public housing facilities**, and it followed with the office's commitment of [$2 1/2 million in capital grants](http://manhattanbp.nyc.gov/html/news/releases-april2015.shtml) for Manhattan public schools to invest in equipment and renovations to establish or expand urban agriculture programs, and a conference, [Grow: Urban Garden Symposium](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/grow-urban-garden-symposium-tickets-18868963578), at the AMNH, that connected community members with urban agriculture experts and leaders. Through a series of panel discussions and an industry fair featuring more than fifteen exhibitors, participants learned how to expand their programs, or start a garden or farm of their own. The primary challenge to urban agriculture in Manhattan is one of limited, expensive space, but by providing access to finding and resources, New Yorkers will be better able to pursue alternative gardening options and make Manhattan a greener, healthier borough.  4. **With Fresh Taste Manhattan,** allocated $70,000 to nonprofits who operate healthy food cooking programs  5. As a Council Member and now Manhattan Borough President, I started the **Fresh Food for Seniors program.** With [GrowNYC](http://www.grownyc.org/), the [Department for the Aging](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/home/home.shtml), and more than a dozen senior centers to deliver fresh, locally-grown fruit and vegetables for just $8 a bag, the Fresh Food for Seniors program has expanded to include neighborhoods stretching from the West Village to Northern Manhattan – and now, Roosevelt Island! Seniors pay $8 for a bag containing five-to-six varieties of fresh fruit and vegetables – a retail value of $15 to $18. Orders are pay-as-you-go, one week ahead of each delivery date. Fresh Food for Seniors allows seniors to sign up for just one order at a time so that they can decide how much food they need, when they need it. Produce is ordered through GrowNYC at wholesale prices from farmers in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania.  6. At **1 Centre Street, my office started a Food Box CSA** with GrowNYC and the Dept of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), and participants are the many city workers at 1 Centre Street, NYPD and City Council members and staff. This is GrowNYC’s largest CSA and operates all year long.  7. **Pension Fund Divestment from Fossil Fuel Exposure** As a NYCERS pension fund trustee I voted to hire climate change consultants Mercer and Trucost to conduct a Carbon Footprint Analysis and Climate Change Risk Assessment of pension fund fossil fuel intensive assets.  It is my expectation that public pension funds will proceed with a sense of urgency and get to the bottom of our portfolio climate risk and carbon footprint exposure.  As long-term principled Trustee Investors we are responsible to mitigate these risks and search for investment opportunities consistent with and conducive to the sustainable environments our beneficiaries expect to enjoy and live upon retirement for decades to come.  8. **Plastic Bags Bill**I am a vocal supporter, the only Borough President, of the NYC plastic bags fee bill to reduce massive and harmful plastic bag-waste which was stalled in Albany. I provided testimony, wrote letters and held an elevator pitch contest for the best explanation of the connection between plastic-bag waste, the environment and climate change. Every year, New York City residents needlessly throw away over 10 billion single-use plastic bags, a petroleum-product, many of which end up in our neighborhoods, trees, streets and oceans.  NYC spends $12.5 million per year to send then to landfills. These policies have proven successful elsewhere. Hundreds of cities and states across the U.S. (and even whole countries around the world) have solved this problem with a simple and effective policy: a small charge on single-use bags to encourage people to bring reusable bags instead.  To help achieve the attitudinal and behavioral shifts we seek my office spearheaded a large-scale educational effort and distributed 1,000s of reusable canvass bags at local supermarkets and events. (Very popular!).  9. Lately, I have participated in many **rallies against the Trump administration, including ones to fight bad policy of climate change.** |

**ISSUES**

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 2014-18 NYC Policy Agenda*](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NYC_Agenda_FINAL.pdf) *when formulating your responses.*)

Healthy New Yorkers: Policies that improve the well-being of all New Yorkers through the protection of the environment and that provide access to basic needs.

1. Water Quality — Every New Yorker has the right to clean drinking water and waterways

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| -Investment in the **Harbor School on Governor’s Island and the Billion Oyster Project**  -Support company [**Woosh Water**](https://www.wooshwater.com/en.aspx) which is helping to conserve water and reduce plastic consumption by reinventing the public drinking fountain with a high-tech and networked solution. They have a proposal to put drinking fountains in the subway platforms, and I support them as I want many more water fountains in NYC. |

1. Air Quality – Every New Yorker has the right to breathe clean air

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| -Advocate for implementation of the **idling law**  -Successful in getting **air quality monitors** at Riverbank State Park and now there are mandated monthly air quality reports to local community board. This effort was necessary because there were high readings of formaldehyde at the park.  -Advocate daily for residents of **NYCHA who have mold** in their apartment  -Advocate for residents who live near construction sites to support a site that is within the law re **dust,** watering down etc. Member of the NYU Task Force with Village residents on NYU construction |

1. Healthy & Local Food – Every New Yorker has the right to access healthy, local, affordable produce

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| -Initiated **Fresh Food for Seniors** which is now Manhattan-wide (and very popular!) and the **Food Box CSA** at 1 Centre Street (see above)  - For the last three summers, we called on the Department of Education (DOE) to significantly improve outreach and delivery of its **summer food program for schoolchildren** as a way to combat hunger in New York. DOE did not tell families before school let out about the program, so we did our own flyers – with a list of all the sites including participating public schools, community pool centers, New York City Housing Authority complexes, Libraries, and other locations around the city - and handed them out at all Title 1 schools summer after summer. There is improvement but much more advocacy is necessary to inform parents as to where the summer food sites are. DOE serves over 700,000 free meals to children every day during the school year. These meals, which include breakfast and lunch, are vital to families struggling to keep their children fed and healthy. But what happens when school lets out for the summer? Many eligible families don’t know about the federally funded [Summer Meals Program](http://www.schoolfoodnyc.org/sch_search/summermeals.aspx) offered across the city. This crucial resource provides free, nutritious breakfasts and lunches to children 18 and younger at convenient sites across the city – with the added benefit of seven-day services and four mobile food trucks.  -Advocate for **improved school food and support Wellness in the Schools**  -Support groups such as **Harlem Grown and Green City Force** which work with low income communities to grow fresh fruits and vegetables |

1. Green Buildings – Every New Yorker deserves the protection of a home that is energy efficient and is resilient to impacts of storms heat waves and extended utility outages

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| -Support **Passive House** legislation, passed reso at Borough Board and successfully advocated for Passive House for rezoning at 111 St project in E Harlem.  -Supported **green building standards** in E Midtown rezoning and will continue to do so in all rezonings |

Strong Neighborhoods: Promote policies that improve the quality of life for communities in all five boroughs.

1. Parks & Recreation – Every New Yorker should live within a 10-minute walk of a park that is clean, safe and well-maintained

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| -Have invested over **$20 m in parks** as MBP and will continue to do so. Need parks close to residences and work places that are well maintained.  -Funded and advocated for protection of **community gardens** and will continue to do so  -Funded **jointly operated DOE and Parks playgrounds** because they are open to the public and the school.  -Support **open space** in rezonings |

1. Waterfront Access – Every New Yorker should have safe and public access to clean rivers, creeks, bays, harbors and other waterways

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| -Funded **kayak dock** on Governor’s Island and support all kayak programs  -Advocate for the **Brooklyn Bridge Beach**  -Initiated funding and interest in **Pier 107** in E Harlem which is now being repaired  -Invested in access at **South Street Seaport** and the Museum’s historic ships. Am primary supporter of keeping South Street Seaport an historic site and accessible to the public.  -On-going support for the Harbor School and the Billion Oyster Project  -Supporter of **Swindler Cove** at Sherman Creek in Inwood |

1. Transportation – Every New Yorker should have safe, affordable, reliable and efficient transportation options in their daily life

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| -Sponsored first ever forum in NYC on **driverless cars** (and car was on display at 1 Centre)  -Passed legislation to study **electric cars** and now member of the TF on the topic  -Support protected **bike lanes, Citibike,** and bikes as transportation  -Advocate for **ferries** and their expanded service  -Advocate for improved **Access A Ride** service and other transportation for the disabled  -Support sustained funding for the **MTA via MoveNY** and with the IBO released a study on funding needed now for the signal system in the subways |

1. Resiliency & Recovery – All communities should be better able to handle extreme weather events: rainfall, snow, storm surges, heavy wind, heat and utility failures

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| -Included in the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan efforts to implement preparedness , working with **CERT and COAD** (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) to educate the community on resiliency  -On TF with **East Side Coastal Resiliency Project**  -On TF with the **Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency Project**  -Support **Lower East Side Ecology Center**  -Sponsored **forums on disaster** with the Governor’s office (Go Bags are popular)  -Support the **CERT** teams borough wide |

Vibrant Economy: Promote policies that foster green job creation while protecting New Yorkers from the effects of climate change

1. Infrastructure – Make critical investments to maintain New York City’s competitive edge in the global economy while creating local jobs

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| -Only borough to sponsor in 2016 and 2017 forums (in lower Manhattan and in Harlem) to educate Manhattan organizations and companies on the application process for funding from the **NYS Regional Economic Development Council**. This effort resulted in much more funding for infrastructure in Manhattan!  -Allocated over $120 in **MBPO capital** funds in Manhattan  -Committed to expansion of the **2nd Ave subway**  -Support expansion of **Citibike** |

1. Solid Waste – Effective solid waste management will reduce environmental burdens in overburdened communities, save the city millions of dollars in exporting waste and generate quality green jobs

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| -**SWAB** is charter mandated and is most active of any borough’s SWAB. Appointed new members to 50 member board, and for 3 ½ years there have been active meetings and many visitors at every gathering. Accomplishments: SWAB holds annual fundraiser and with Citizens Committee for NY, allocates $ to nonprofits working on composting projects and also (new) on Reuse and Repair projects. Passes resolutions, testifies at hearings, and sets priorities for Manhattan. SWAB info is kept up to date on its new website.  -Advocate for correct implementation of **organic waste programs in schools** and then for pick up by same truck of residential organics along the route  -Advocate for **clothing pick** up by DSNY and by the veterans who have a company that picks up at small buildings  -Advocate for **recycling at NYCHA**  -In all ULURPS, advocate for space in the building for waste so as to get to **zero waste** |

1. Green Workforce Development – Provide training for New Yorkers to help green the city and support its resiliency

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| -Support **Zohn Center** at CCNY/CUNY where they are developing tech related green infrastructure systems, such as a portable food growing unit.  -Support **SolarOne, Green Work Force** and other groups focused on green jobs |