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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
- Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg (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](#)

- ☒ 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: Helen Rosenthal

Office Sought (district if applicable): New York City Council – District 6 (Manhattan)

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

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

I'm very proud to have earned a 100% score from the NYLCV for each of my three full years in office (2014, 2015, 2016).

I'm proud to have been the Prime Sponsor of the Barnes Dance Pedestrian Crossing Systems Study (2015, Intro 1177), which would require the feasibility of implementing the Barnes Dance crossing system in certain dangerous intersections throughout NYC. The Barnes Dance method has been used effectively throughout the world, and been tested in US cities



like Washington, DC and Pittsburgh. I publicly advocated for this bill both among my colleagues and spoke on it behalf on a number of media outlets, including on NY1 television. The bill recently passed the City Council by a vote of 49-0.

In May, 2017, I brought Dan Zarrilli, Senior Director of Climate Policy and Programs and Chief Resilience Officer for the NYC Mayor's Office, on to MNN "Represent NYC" to discuss protecting the City from Climate Change.

Presently, I'm working to develop legislation - which we hope to introduce shortly - which will require NYC's local energy code to match the "stretch" energy code created by NYSEERDA (or in the absence of an "stretch energy code", adopt one which is 20% more stringent than the State energy code).

This past January, 2017, my Committee on Contracts held an Oversight Hearing about the DCAS' solar power purchase agreements. Our goal was to hold the City's feet to the fire about their solar investments.

In 2015, I Co-Prime sponsored legislation (Intro 858-2015; Intro 859-2015) to ban the noisiest tourist helicopters; and helped negotiate a ban on Sunday flights of tourist helicopters and a 50% reduction in flights the rest of the time.

Working with CM Mark Levine, I helped persuade (in June 2015) the City to permanently close the Central Park Loop north of 72nd Street to vehicles as well as the West Drive, and am continuing to work with the Administration to close the loop entirely to vehicles.

Also in 2015, I Co-Prime Sponsored (with CM Johnson) legislation which would require all city-owned buildings be powered by renewable energy sources by 2050.

In September 2015, I co-authored (with CM Constantinides) a letter to the City's five pension boards calling on them to study, among other things, increasing their investment in renewable energy companies.

In 2014, as part of the Vision Zero plan, Mayor de Blasio signed into law my bill (Local Law 27, or "Cooper's Law") that holds TLC-licensed drivers accountable for causing critical injury or death in a crash as a result of a moving traffic violation.

As an avid biker, whose first job as a teenager was in a bike store, I often ride to work from my Upper West Side apartment to City Hall. I've energetically supported the expansion of the City Bike program in my District; worked successfully to expand bike lanes on the

Upper West Side; and introduced legislation (Int. 863-2015) that would require the text on delivery cyclist vests to be reflective and at least two inches in height, so residents will be able to file a claim against businesses whose delivery cyclists break traffic safety laws.

Holding a Master's Degree in public health, I'm highly attuned to issues involving nutrition the benefits of a plant-based diet; and to help promote awareness of the benefits of a reduced-meat diet, teamed with CM Corey Johnson to introduce and pass a resolution proclaiming all Monday's to be "Meatless Mondays" to encourage residents to eat more plant-based meals.

For the environment, in its broadest sense, to be a safe and secure one for all New Yorkers, it must fully embrace the diversity of its residents. In this regard, I'm proud to have been the only elected official to come out in favor of a parent-backed public school integration plan on the Upper West Side, and to have help persuade the Administration and Department of Education to adopt it. I'm similarly proud to have been endorsed by every member of the NYC Council's LGBTQ Caucus in my campaign for re-election.

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](#) when formulating your responses)

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

Water Quality — Every New Yorker has the right to clean drinking water & waterways

My particular focus in this area will be on robust legislative and administrative steps to fully protect New York City's drinking watershed from the impacts of natural gas drilling.

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

I favor legislative and administrative measures which would result in the City's fleet of owned motor vehicles to be 100% electric or hybrid within a 10 year period.



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

I'm proud to offer a low cost fresh vegetable and fruit bag to the seniors in my district, from June to November each year. I also fund fresh vegetable and fruit boxes for those residents in supportive housing at the Rustin House building.

Homes that offer Protection and Savings – 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

Homes that are energy efficient and resilient are more valuable, but residents shouldn't be punished - via higher assessments and associated real-estate taxes -for making these investments. I favor real-estate assessment and tax credits that will encourage in energy efficient and resilient homes.

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

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

We need to encourage private giving to smaller parks throughout the City. I favor establishing a pilot program, funded through the budget process, which will “match” private donations (personal, business, foundations) made to any city park beyond the 5 largest.

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

As my District runs adjacent to the Hudson River, waterfront access issues are often – literally – in my line of sight. Because so much of New York City sits close to a waterfront, I favor the establishment of a Department of the Waterfront to develop a cohesive strategy and focused approach to waterfront-related issues citywide.

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

Considering nearly 40% of New Yorkers live at or near the poverty line, the cost of public transportation represents a real and regressive tax on many City residents who can barely afford it; an unconscionable one to people working minimum wage jobs or living on social security. I favor reduced fares for students, seniors and those between jobs – and would support taxes and the establishment of a dedicated revenue stream for this purpose.

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

My focus here is to upgrade NYCHA buildings-- through the “weatherization” program or otherwise, which are too often poorly maintained and energy inefficient. I’ll use my role as a member of the City Council’s Budget Negotiating Committee, to advocate strongly for funding this purpose.

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

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

My commitment here is reflected by the Hearing I held in January 2017 to hold the City’s feet to the fire to build solar quickly and with local labor.

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



I'm very much in favor of implementing "pay to throw" programs for institutional waste generators serviced by the NYC Department of Transportation, charging for trash collection based on the amount being thrown away.

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

Philosophically, I've long felt we need a "WPA-style" jobs program to combat youth unemployment. But to result in positive, long-term employment effects, these should be "jobs of the future" – so I favor this jobs program be focused on a NYC Green Job Corp.