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2017 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire for Long Island 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.

After receipt of your completed questionnaire, you will be invited to participate in a formal interview with our Chapter Board. The interview will provide you with an opportunity to present your credentials, elaborate on your questionnaire responses, and respond to questions. Here are a few more guidelines:

- Questionnaires are due **Friday, June 2**
- The completed questionnaire is mandatory for endorsement consideration and must be submitted via e-mail as a Microsoft Word file to: politics@nylcv.org
- To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV's 2016-17 Long Island Policy Agenda](#)

- Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg (jklainberg@nylcv.org)

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

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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.

I began my career working in the Senate for Senator Frank Lautenberg and Senator John Kerry both pro-environment champions. I worked for the National Environmental Trust which is now a part of the PEW Environmental Trust and was a part of the National Environmental Trust at the Climate Meetings in Bonn, Germany where I saw first-hand how important it is for the United States to be a leader on Climate Change. I have served as a board member of the Long Island Chapter of the New York League of Conservation Voters.

As Deputy Town Supervisor under Brian Foley in Brookhaven we worked hand in hand with the League of Conservation Voters to work towards a set of progressive climate change goals for the town. We were proud to be a leader on climate change issues and successfully pushed through the environmentally forward looking Caitness Energy Plan. We had a very ambitious open space program to preserve open spaces in Brookhaven.

Protecting our environment and addressing climate change - while at the same time protecting ourselves from the effects of climate change and sea level rise - will continue to be one of our greatest challenges. Yet, an opportunity presents itself. We must plan for sustainable, transit-oriented development and efficiently manage our resources, not only to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions but also to reduce living costs and spur economic development. Likewise, smart investment in and management of public assets can significantly decrease a community's energy use and reduce budgetary costs. Recognizing the importance of sustainability in all government operations - making sustainability a dedicated budget priority as I have demonstrated in Long Beach - reduces GHG emissions and saves taxpayer dollars.

As City Manager of the City of Long Beach I have worked to incorporate environmental sustainability and resilience into everything we do, and we have become a model for surrounding communities. We have developed strategies, taken actions, and designed projects to reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, protect and improve public resources, and allow the City to become more resilient in the face of sea level rise and climate change. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, I established the City's first-ever Department of Economic Development and Planning to secure grant funding and support economic development, transportation, and environmental planning, including a community-driven Draft Comprehensive Plan update, funded by state grants that has identified opportunities that can accelerate Long Beach's transition from post-Sandy recovery to a thriving and resilient community. This year we implemented measures to limit plastic bags and increase the use of reusable bags.

Many of these initiatives, set forth by the adoption of the Climate Smart Communities pledge resolution adopted in 2013 and the draft Comprehensive Plan update and described in the following questions, are underway or in planning phases. Currently a Climate Action Plan is also being drafted a Climate Action Plan to formally document these practices and plan for future actions.



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 2016-17 Long Island Policy Agenda](#))

- 2. Expanding Renewable Power: Streamlining and standardizing regulations that will spur innovation and wide-spread adoption in the residential and commercial sectors

As City Manager of Long Beach, the NYS Unified Solar Permit was implemented, streamlining the permitting process for residents and commercial properties owners. Unlike many other communities this is done free of charge. Public education programs have included introducing residents to the solar permitting process and a Solar Homes Tour. In the three years after Sandy, this led to an increase in solar installations of 89%, as compared to the prior three years. I have and will continue to be a proponent of the state and federal incentives that include net metering, on-bill pay options, and tax credits which have been critical in encouraging and expanding the installation of solar.

I have also had the opportunity to oversee the drafting of a community-driven Comprehensive Plan update which identifies solar projects and solar-ready roofing code update actions the City can take going forward to reduce energy costs and GHGs. I am also excited by the promise Community Solar projects can bring to our region, especially for low income areas and denser communities that lack roof space.

- 3. Improving Water Quality: Identifying financing mechanisms to replace failing septic systems

I have been dedicated to and will continue to be an advocate for water conservation and infrastructure funding. Growing up in Kings Park, I understand the difficulties Suffolk County is facing in securing funding to sewer much of the rest of the county, and we face those same issues in many areas of the north shore of Nassau County. I have worked with State Senator Todd Kaminsky to secure water infrastructure funding through this year's state budget and will continue to work with state and federal legislators to make more funding available.

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy Long Beach experienced a near-crisis. It had a sewage treatment plant that was already outdated and now severally storm-damaged. I worked tirelessly to identify various forms of funding to restore the plant and have continued to fund repairs. We have pumped millions of dollars into rehabilitating our sewer and water systems. For our residents, we have brought on a sewer maintenance and replacement system that is improving the system further, preventing harmful leaking into the ground and the water system. **As a result of these improvements, Long Beach treats 1.41 million gallons less sewage a day.**

However, we need a sustainable alternative. We continue to seek an agreement and funding with county and state officials to reduce the Long Beach plant to a pump station and connect to the newly-hardened County plant at Bay Park. Although this experience does not explicitly address failing septic systems I understand many of those same funding streams (through EFC and CFA) are available for sewer projects as well.

4. LIRR Third Track: Ensuring the Long Island Rail Road completes a planned third main line track from Floral Park to Hicksville

I have spoken out on record in favor of the third track at the hearings and will continue to advocate for this project.

5. Expanding Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure: Facilitating the development of a larger network of charging stations that will encourage more municipalities, businesses and individuals to switch to EVs in the coming years

We have seen a surge in demand for electric vehicles, and therefore an increased need for infrastructure. The Long Beach draft Comprehensive Plan update identifies the need to install electric vehicle charging stations throughout the City. Preliminary locations could include destination points such as City Hall and the LIRR, the Recreation Center and the West End business district. We have also explored available funding through NYSERDA's Charge NY and other projects such as EV carports powered by solar through the Clean Energy Communities.

On a personal note, I am seeking to purchase an electric/hybrid vehicle.

6. Sustainable & Transit-Oriented Development: Creating livable and sustainable communities that permit increased density and diversity in our downtowns and neighborhoods

We adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2013, to begin planning our streets to benefit all modes of transportation. This has led to the establishment of a central business district streetscape pilot, as well as reductions in the city-wide speed limit and synchronization of traffic signals to move motor vehicle traffic more efficiently and quicker through the City at a lower rate of speed.

Bicycle parking was also vastly increased at the City's LIRR and bus transportation hub and in the Central Business District. A bicycle share program (which allows you to lock the bicycle at any bike rack) was also acquired to ensure travel from the transportation hub to the central business districts and beach by bicycle rather than car.

The City then secured funding for two projects that will redesign the Central Business District with protected bike lanes, additional bicycle parking and greenery, and improved drainage to encourage smart redevelopment. Upon adoption, the Comprehensive Plan update will lead to zoning code updates that incentivize mixed use, mixed income transit-oriented development on waterfront and brownfield site properties, while preserving community character and public access to green space.

License plate readers have been installed to catch reckless drivers entering the City and DWI enforcement has been increased with grant funding to protect high pedestrian and bicycle traffic in our City.

7. Transportation: Maximizing environmentally friendly mobility options in and around residential and commercial centers

We have improved bus routes and scheduling to get people where they want to go quickly and efficiently, as many of the City's LIRR resident and visitor commuters utilize the City bus system. We are now exploring smartphone applications that make using the system easier for riders and encourage higher use, including user-friendly schedule search features and bus location notifications. Adding a bicycle share has allowed residents and visitors to visit all areas of the City without using a gas-powered vehicle.

Resident's high use of bicycles and the City's addition of a bicycle share has justified the expansion of bicycle infrastructure. A pilot to add bicycle racks in the Central Business District and a redesign of racks at the City's transportation hub has dramatically increased the amount of bicycle parking. Acquiring funding for protected bike lanes in the Central Business District will undoubtedly increase bicycle traffic, reduce car use, and ease parking issues.

8. Open Space Preservation: Planning strategies such as clustering, creating pocket parks in developed areas, and encouraging biotic corridors in less densely populated areas

As a thin, densely developed barrier island we have encouraged and maintained rain and community gardens in partnership with community groups and organizations. Many of the grass malls, located on almost all of the City's streets and boulevards, act as parks for local residents. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy many of those malls lost their trees. We saw the importance to develop a Tree Replanting Master Plan, replant over 2,000 trees, and continue tree planting programs to revitalize these areas.

We outlined the creation of green space and waterfront access in the draft Comprehensive Plan, to make this a priority when developing any lands and while updating the City's zoning code. We have also worked with the DEC to ensure open space and wetlands are preserved while undertaking our Critical Infrastructure Protection and Bayside Bulkheading projects. In the Town of Brookhaven we had an excellent record on protecting open spaces.

9. Sustainable Public Access Management: Making significant impacts on energy use and the environment simply by deciding to spend money and deploy resources wisely

I have worked to make sustainability a budget priority for Long Beach. Since beginning my administration all City streetlights have been installed with induction or LED lighting, City Hall and the Ice Arena lighting has been upgraded including with occupancy sensors, more energy efficient buses are on routes, an electric zamboni for the Ice Arena was purchased, and funding was secured to install solar with battery backup at the City's MLK Center.

Designated as one of Long Island's only Clean Energy Communities, planning is being done to increase efficiency, getting closer to the goal of 100% LED streetlights (we are currently at 59%), which realizes significant energy savings. We have also begun benchmarking municipal building energy usage to identify energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

We also use resources for extensive public outreach and education efforts including energy efficiency and solar education, as well as park programming all summer long. An ordinance was also developed and passed that prohibited smoking at City parks and beaches.

In Long Beach we have dramatically improved recycling in the city and expanded recycling to the beach and boardwalk for the first time.

As Comptroller I will look into using electric and green options to make the county more efficient.

10. Energy: Achieving energy efficiency in residential and commercial settings, in existing and new buildings, and with cutting-edge technology and the smarter use of older technology

My administration quickly implemented the NYS Unified Solar permit. The process to apply for a solar installation permit is quick, simple, and free-of-charge. A public education campaign was implemented to inform residents and business of the easy process and the benefits of solar.

The Building Department was also directed to complete training on the updated Green Building Codes, to incorporate these practices while inspecting. We plan to study and implement solar-ready roofing as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan update.

11. Water Quality and Aquifer Protection: Ensuring clean water not only for drinking but for recreation and agriculture

Long Beach has historically and will continue to face saltwater intrusion, and this is so along the north and south shores of Long Island, in addition to the many chemical plumes that affect our drinking water. We are working with a coalition of municipalities encompassing both North and South shores in order to protect the integrity of our drinking water. As a member of the Western Nassau Aquifer Committee and steering committee member for the USGS Groundwater Sustainability Study, I will continue to be at the forefront in protecting Long Island's aquifers.

As previously mentioned, I have worked to upgrade and replace a severely outdated sewage treatment system including its plant and piping and will continue to work to ensure that sewage is properly treated and sent through ocean outfalls to improve the health of the bays and subsequently their recreational potential. To do that we must connect and pump sewage to the newly-hardened and upgraded Bay Park plant, over to the Cedar Creek plant in Wantagh, which has an ocean outfall pipeline. We have also partnered with an environmental risk management consultant to inspect and insure residential sewer laterals.

12. Natural Resource Protection – Comprehensively managing and protecting regional natural resources (i.e., air, water and land)

Long Beach passed Nassau County's first ever Carryout Bag Ordinance, requiring businesses to charge a minimum of five cents for each carryout bag of any kind provide to customers to encourage residents and visitors to bring their own reusable bag. It is the first charge-based bag law implemented on Long Island. We already have empirical evidence that the law will have significant impacts, and we continue to track its progress. An intensive education campaign, started in late 2015, continues.

We have also established a Clean Team, a continuation of the City's Comeback Crew which helped remove debris and replant dunes after Superstorm Sandy. The Clean Team is a combination of City Public Works crews that clean trash and debris in the downtowns, and resident volunteers that conduct beach, bay, and canal cleanups. This initiative has prevented debris from clogging drains and entering waterways

We also made it a priority to replace 2,400 Sandy-damaged trees with over 3,000 native, hydric trees that survive conditions and soak up groundwater with continuous funding through capital budget and grant sources. A Tree Replanting Master Plan was developed to accomplish this and continues to be utilized for additional projects.

Other action items in the draft Comprehensive Plan, which will be incorporated into the following zoning code update or studied for future feasibility, include rooftop gardens, green roofs, permeable pavement, and a waste to energy pilot program.

13. Farms and Local Food: Managing development and providing access to healthy, fresh foods

We have partnered with our Farmers Market to host regional organic fruits, vegetables, and meats Wednesdays and Saturdays at Kennedy Plaza, a centralized community location. They were also a partner and main draw for our 2017 Earth Day celebration. We have also partnered with local organizations and community groups to create and maintain rain and community gardens.