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2017 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire   
for Westchester 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](mailto:politics@nylcv.org)
* To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV’s 2016-17 Westchester Policy Agenda](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2016-17WestchesterAgendaFINAL.pdf)
* Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg ([jklainberg@nylcv.org](mailto:jklainberg@nylcv.org))

**Campaign Contact Information**

Candidate Name: John G. Testa  
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Campaign Manager’s name and email: n/a  
Press Secretary’s name and email: n/a  
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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| For the past 20 years as an elected official as a Peekskill City Councilman, Peekskill Mayor and presently Westchester County Legislator I have a strong and consistent record of supporting and initiating environmentally related actions and policies.  As a County Legislator, I have been a member of the Environment and Energy Committee every term and have actively supported many issues related to preparing New York and Westchester County on environmental matters. This term there are two committees; Environment and Health and Energy &Regional Efficiencies. I am a member of both.  I was the sponsor at the BOL of a resolution to oppose the Oil Barge Anchorage sites along the Hudson. We were the first county to officially do so. I have continually worked closely in a bi partisan way to continue to oppose this proposal.  This term I was able to work closely with Energize NY, Solarize Westchester and Sustainable Westchester to encourage and support alternative energy and energy efficient replacement projects. Two such projects occurred in my district; a solar installation at St. Christopher’s Church in Montrose and a large-scale project at the Drum Hill Senior Living facility in Peekskill. The Solarize Peekskill project has also yielded several projects. We have also passed legislation to phase out #4 and #6 fuel oil use in Westchester. I will be participating in the Governor’s NYS Task Force regarding the closing of Indian Point.  I have supported and helped develop county policies such as a hybrid vehicle law for county vehicles; an extended recycling law; promoting home energy audits; tax breaks for solar panel installation in homes; preventing the use of hydrofracking fluids in Westchester; promoting green job creation; legislation to streamline the county certification process for solar panel installers; a survey of all county owned structures to determine feasibility of solar panel installation; the bonding and infrastructure improvements made to several of our County Parks. I have helped create a position in county government of “Energy Director,” a position I have long supported. Other actions recently taken are extensive sewer district upgrades, water quality investment, Long Island Sound Bio Nutrient improvement, Stormwater Management Plans throughout the county and additions to the County Agricultural District.  As Mayor of Peekskill: I instituted a comprehensive solid waste removal program with an emphasis on increasing citywide recycling; initiated a project to construct a new state-of-the-art water treatment facility: Worked jointly with Scenic Hudson on a 4.5-acre former industrial waterfront property called “Peekskill Landing” to clean up the land, the shoreline and preserve open space; Worked closely with the DEC to develop a remediation plan for a 4-acre area originally utilized as the city landfill; With a grant from The NY State Power Authority we were able to replace 10 fossil fuel vehicles with electric cars; worked with representatives in Albany to establish a Conservation Easement with the State of New York that will permanently assure that the 500 acres of Peekskill owned property surrounding our reservoirs would be undevelopable; Was able to secure a 45-acre parcel known as “Fort Hill” as historic parkland; instituted a Certified Local Government Landmarks Board that has helped to ensure the preservation of buildings within our Downtown Historic District. Adaptive re-use of buildings was encouraged throughout the city; With an agreement with the NYS Power Authority we were able to install over 600 energy-efficient traffic and pedestrian signals within the Peekskill Business District.  Personally, I was high school teacher of Technology Education for 33 years, retiring in 2013. As part of my curriculum I included and emphasized environmentally friendly technology, especially renewable energy sources. In particular units and labs dedicated to solar and wind energy where prototypes were built and tested by the students. |

**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 Westchester Policy Agenda](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2016-17WestchesterAgendaFINAL.pdf))

1. Sustainable Development: Advancing modernized zoning to encourage mixed land use and compact development

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| Very Committed. |

1. Invasive Species: Educating the public on this problem and implementing better management practices

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| Very Committed. This issue has been a subject of concern with the BOL as we discuss the work being done along our waterways for flood mitigation, etc. |

1. Cleaner Air: Speeding up conversions and retrofits of home heating oil No. 6 and No. 4 to more efficient heating systems

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| Very Committed. In addition to passing the legislation I believe more projects as the one through Energize NY with Drum Hill in Peekskill will assist in the speeding up the elimination of those fuels. |

1. 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

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| Very Committed. We are in the process of finalizing a policy to implement a plan for both county employee and public use. |

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

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| Very Committed. |

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

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| Very Committed. Improving and expanding infrastructure for these initiatives is vital. |

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

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| Very Committed. Downtown revitalization was a focus of my administration while Mayor of Peekskill. We also focused on preserving historic structures and adaptive-reuse of buildings and created a Certified Local Government Downtown Historic District in Peekskill. |

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

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| Very Committed. I have been involved in utilizing these concepts with a number of projects while in office. |

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

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| Very Committed. As mentioned above, while Mayor of Peekskill I was able spearhead important projects such as a establishing a Conservation Easement with the State of New York that will permanently assure that the 500 acres of Peekskill owned property surrounding our reservoirs would be undevelopable; Was able to secure a 45-acre parcel known as “Fort Hill” as historic parkland; partnered with Scenic Hudson on a 4.5-acre former industrial waterfront property called “Peekskill Landing” to clean up the land, the shoreline and preserve open space; Worked closely with the DEC to develop a remediation plan for a 4-acre area originally utilized as the city landfill. |

1. 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

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| Very Committed. As mentioned above – to continue audits, alternative energy installations, retrofit and replacement upgrade projects. I was active in assuring such policies were included in the recent North 60 project agreement. |

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

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| Very Committed. I represent an area where the County’s Agricultural District is concentrated and have participated in the recertification process and annual review of the district and adding new and expanded parcels to the district. I have supported Farmer’s Markets like the one in Peekskill since I was a City Councilman and in recent years supported the addition of indoor markets during the winter months. I also support the “Harvest for Health” weekly market hosted by the NY-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital. |