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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

Candidate Name: Laura M. Schaefer

Office Sought (district if applicable): Legislator for the 14th Legislative District of Nassau County

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Press Secretary's name and email:

Scheduler's name and email: John Hommel, (516) 571-6214

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.

As Chairwoman of the Planning, Development and Environment Committee of the Nassau County Legislature I have and will continue to support efforts to ensure that are sewage treatment plans are state of the art. We have made tremendous progress over the last 3 ½ years (my time in office) to otherwise extremely damaged plants. I also support the analysis of the cross-county pipe from Bay Park to Cedar creek so that we can discharge treated effluent into the ocean. I have voted to pass legislation that requires smart-meter rain sensors so that automatic irrigation system won't operate when there's sufficient moisture in the ground. We anticipate that this initiative alone could save as much as 40% of groundwater pumped from our sole source aquifer during the dry summer months. In addition, I am always open to exploring new cost-cutting measures and renewable energy initiatives to help maintain and preserve our high quality of life here in Nassau County.

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

In 2016, I voted to approve Property Assessed Clean Energy financing to enable commercial properties to install renewable energy solar systems. I also support financing enabling residential homeowners to install solar systems as well as the County's efforts to promote free solar evaluations and the solar incentives offered by New York State for those who avail themselves of these opportunities.

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

Water Quality is an extremely important issue on Long Island, specifically in my district as I represent a portion of Bethpage. In that regard, I have maintained close relationships with the various Water District members in my district and have even partnered with them to hold community meetings so as to keep our residents informed as to what's going on with this issue. In addition, I have and will continue to support government financing and assistance to aid in the replacement of the failing septic systems. The expansion of sewer systems into unsewered areas is an investment within the jurisdiction of New York State. As such, I support Governor Cuomo's recent legislation to provide funding for Nassau County water protection. Also, as a county legislator, I have supported a \$4 million project to connect the Sea Cliff business district to the Glen Cove sewage treatment plant. Unfortunately, this project did not get enough support from some of my colleagues on the legislature to push it forward. Regardless, I will continue to support this project when the opportunity to do so presents itself again as it would help restore the health of Hempstead Harbor and help to alleviate beach closures. I have also voted in favor of funding to repair and rebuild the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant and support our current efforts to reduce nitrogen discharge. I have also supported funding for improvements to the Glen Cove system and I'll continue to support funding for an ocean outfall project and to link Long Beach and Point Lookout systems to Bay Park.

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

I support this project to the extent it can alleviate train traffic along the main lines but I have concerns and have expressed same to the Governor's office with regard to the potential increase in freight traffic and hauling of garbage through these communities. Therefore, I am interested in what safeguards and restrictions will be put in place to prevent that from happening and I will continue to watch how these issues are addressed very closely.

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

Switching to Electric Vehicle use in the County would provide a tremendous benefit for the environment and the County budget in the long run. As such, I would fully support exploration of a county-wide EV program.

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

I am in favor of creating livable and sustainable communities in my district to the extent that they permit our residents to enjoy the unique beauty and benefits that living on Long Island has to offer. In fact, in Westbury, my hometown, our village has received a \$10 million grant through the State of New York's Downtown Revitalization Initiative which I fully support. I also support the application of funding for revitalization efforts in Hicksville, which is also in my district, including the refurbishing of the train station which is currently under construction.

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

I definitely support exploration and implementation of opportunities to maximize environmentally friendly mobility options in and around residential and commercial centers via increased bicycle paths, increased transportation via railroad and a bus rapid transit system.

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

I support to the preservation of open space especially since there isn't too much of it to preserve in Nassau County. I also fully support the care and maintenance of lands perpetually preserved and keep an eye out for additional preservation opportunities, especially when the sale of County land is at issue.

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

One of the great initiatives I have and will continue to support as a member of the legislature is the installation of LED lights in our Correctional Center, traffic signals and villages within my district. I have also and will continue to support the implementation of energy saving measures in the county such as smart-meter irrigation systems, motion-activated systems in County restrooms, better heating systems and more efficient heat-saving windows in County building renovation projects.

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

As previously stated, I voted in favor of smart-metering for our residential irrigation systems. Similarly, I believe there is opportunity to install smart meter systems in our county electrical and gas system and to promote same to our residents. The use of such systems also help the utility companies to better serve our residents by enabling them to obtain more accurate data as to usage and opportunities for conservation going forward.

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

In terms of water quality I support the reduction of nitrogen levels and any other damaging compounds (ie., 1,4 dioxane) in our drinking water as well as in the water that we play in and fish from. The cleaner the water, the more improvement we will see overall in terms of our beaches and bays and our marine life, including the fish that are caught for consumption. This is why building the ocean outfall pipe is especially important and why I will continue to support same. In addition, management of storm water runoff is very important for maintenance of our infrastructure as are any other projects to further protect our beaches and bays.

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

I believe we must always seek to manage and protect natural resources and will continue to support same. The preservation of our resources was unfortunately overlooked by many for a long time resulting in our current state of having to work especially hard to protect them. I believe that we all need to work together to conserve and preserve the beautiful natural resources that we have before it's too late.

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

I fully support managing development and providing access to healthy, fresh foods to our residents. We have a number of farms located on County property and maintaining and supporting them needs to remain a priority so that we can continue the establishment of Farmers Markets in our communities. These markets are good for the economy, provide job opportunities, encourage residents to come out, socialize and promote a healthy lifestyle. As such, the management of development is important so that there is always a place for these markets and farms in Nassau County and as Chairwoman of the Planning, Development and Environment Committee on the Nassau County Legislature, I will always carefully vet the sale and/or development of these properties.