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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: [NY](#)
 - 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: Margaret S. Chin

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

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

As Council Member, I am proud of my legislative record on protecting the environment. For the past few years, I have received 100 percent on NYLCV's scorecard – an accomplishment of which I am extremely proud.

For the last 30 years, I have lived in the Financial District of Manhattan. In that time, I have seen my neighborhood change from a commercial hub to an increasingly residential neighborhood. Despite the influx of new residents, Manhattan's Community Board 1, which covers the Financial District, TriBeCa, the historic Battery, the Seaport, and Battery Park City, has the 3rd worst air quality compared to the rest of the City's community districts. That is why I support important legislation that protects the environment, like Intro 712, which required the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to conduct air quality surveys, and fought hard to pass legislation like Intro 209 to reduce the number of carryout bags that find their way into our storm drains and waterways, and contribute greatly to our city's waste stream.

The City Council accomplished much this term, but we need to continue fighting to protect our environment, to increase our city's resiliency against future storms and to address the disastrous effects of global climate change. Together, with the NYLCV and other environmental advocates, I will continue to push for legislation to rid the city of unused, unrecyclable plastic bags, to improve air and water quality for all New Yorkers, and to invest more into our public green spaces.

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.

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

Our reservoirs, drinking water, and waterways give life to this city. I was a proud sponsor of, and happily voted for, Intro 1346, which holds the New York City Department of Environmental Protection accountable and allows DEP to implement and enforce the terms of MS4 Permit areas.

Furthermore, I continue to be supportive of my elected colleagues' efforts in all levels of government to ensure lead-free drinking water in schools. This will require consistent and accurate testing of all water fountains in our public schools and swift action when tests find unacceptable levels of lead in the drinking water.

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

As a resident and representative of Lower Manhattan, I know the importance of having good air quality. That is why I supported Intro 712, which required the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to conduct air quality surveys and publish results annually. This report allows the public to hold these agencies accountable and provides us with the data and information necessary to address air quality issues that far too many communities face.

Indoor mold and other allergens can lead to lifetime afflictions like asthma. Approximately, 117,000 children in New York are afflicted with asthma and a disproportionate number of them are low-income. That is why I am supportive of Intro 385, which aims to address asthma hazards caused by improper building maintenance. Furthermore, I am also a proud sponsor of Intro 978, which creates commonsense safety standards for mold remediation work.

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

Growing up in Chinatown, my family and I had access to healthy and affordable fruits and vegetables from a variety of markets. However, this is not the case with many neighborhoods around the City. That is why I support GrowNYC's farmers markets using my Council discretionary funds.

Unfortunately, I am fighting a recent trend of affordable supermarket closures. A couple years ago, a Pathmark located near the waterfront on the Lower East Side closed down to make way for a luxury condo tower. Just a couple of months ago, a Met Foodmarket in Little Italy shuttered its doors due to soaring rents. I am committed to using my position as an elected official to advocate for the preservation of affordable supermarkets selling fresh, healthy, affordable and local produce in my Council District.

5. 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

Multiple dwellings and other smaller family homes have a large impact on our environment. That is why I support several pieces of legislation that seek to minimize the environmental impact of residential buildings and homes. I am a sponsor of Intro 609, legislation that identifies specific buildings that are best served by geothermal energy, which will reduce the citywide emissions by 2.6%. I am also supportive of Intro 642, which requires city-owned buildings to use a percentage of B5 biodiesel fuel by various deadlines.

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

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

Growing up in Chinatown and then settling down with my family in the Financial District, public parks and open green space continue to be a priority for me and the residents that I represent. That is why I supported Intro 154, which requires the parks department report on the status of capital projects and parks maintenance. However, even with this law, more can be done so that the Parks Departments' contracting and construction process is transparent. I also am a sponsor of Intro 1340, which requires the Parks Department to provide elected officials and the community with regular updates regarding parks capital projects. When I allocate hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Parks Department to maintain the precious public green spaces in my district, transparency is imperative.

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

Council District 1, which includes Governor's Island, is surrounded by the waterfront, which my residents, small businesses and nonprofits use as a valuable resource every single day. Through the Council's discretionary budget process, I make sure to support programs so that they are accessible to the public, including City of Water Day, the Billion Oyster Project, and several historic ships owned by the South Street Seaport Museum.

Furthermore, in order to keep the treasures we have in our waterfronts, we also need to take care of the marine wildlife there. That is why I was a proud sponsor of and voted for Intro 928, legislation banning personal care products containing microbeads. These products, which eventually end up in storm drains and pollute our rivers, can potentially harm marine life that many nonprofits educational programs depend on.

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

I do not own a car, so I mostly walk and use public transit to get around. That is why I continue to advocate for more funding and more efficient modes of public transportation. However, I understand that many residents in my district choose to drive, so I support legislation that develops infrastructure for drivers that will allow them to make environmentally friendlier choices, like buying an electric vehicle (Intro 1124) or easily access a car-sharing program (Intro 873). I also sponsored and voted for Intro 1077, which will look into implementing the Barnes Dance pedestrian crossing at certain dangerous intersections, like the 4-way crossing at Chatham Sq., Mott Street, Park Row, and St. James Place in my district. By sponsoring these bills, I hope to make Lower Manhattan safer and more healthy to live, shop and play.

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

Superstorm Sandy devastated many parts of Lower Manhattan. Buildings were flooded.

Residents lost power. And small businesses owners watched as their hard work was swept away by the storm's powerful surge. As a member of the City Council's Committee on Recovery and Resiliency, I am fighting every day to make sure we are prepared for the next storm.

That is why I introduced and passed Res 909, which called on the Department of Housing and Urban Development to support NYC's application for the National Disaster Resilience Competition. Furthermore, I successfully advocated for Mayor de Blasio to commit \$100 million to bolster the application. The NDRC awarded Lower Manhattan with \$176 million in funding, allowing for a total of \$276 million in funding to protect the coasts in Lower Manhattan from future floods.

Today, we continue to engage in community resiliency efforts in Community Boards 1 and 3 to protect our coasts from another Sandy. Furthermore, we're working closely with NYCHA resident leaders to ensure all resiliency work at Smith Houses and LaGuardia houses are done quickly and safely.

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

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

Green infrastructure is going to be one of the cornerstones of our local economy. I am a sponsor of the Green Buildings Package (Intro 1160, 1163, 1165), bills that require energy and water benchmarking, lighting retrofitting, and sub-metering requirements for certain buildings. This will effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 25,000 tons while creating hundreds of new green infrastructure jobs.

I am also a sponsor of Intro 739, which creates a solar ombudsperson within the Department of Buildings to respond to any questions, concerns, or complaints about solar power systems. By having this position in place, City residents will be encouraged to build solar power systems within their homes.

11. 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

One of my proudest achievements in my two terms in the City Council is passing Intro 209-A, the Bring Your Own Bag bill. The City spends too much money removing billions of plastic bags for storm drains, waterways, and trees. Removal of these single use bags to landfills also disproportionately harms certain neighborhoods, causing poor air quality and congestion from garbage trucks. Council Member Lander and I partnered with advocates like NYCLV for years to provide a solution to these problems. Unfortunately, the State pre-empted the legislation, but I will continue the fight into the next term.

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

I was proud to sponsor and vote for Intro 886, legislation which identifies serious environmental issues that affect residents and communities within New York City. By educating residents about the issues and how they can make money while helping their neighborhoods, this law will inevitably create more green jobs. As stated above, I am a sponsor of the Green Buildings Package, which will create hundreds of needed green infrastructure jobs across the City.