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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](mailto:politics@nylcv.org)
  + Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg ([jklainberg@nylcv.org](mailto: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](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NYC_Agenda_FINAL.pdf)
* 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**

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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.

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| **As chair of the City Council’s Committee on Recovery and Resiliency, a member of the OneNYC Advisory Board, and the elected representative of communities that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, I have actively advanced a pro-environment agenda in my first term in office, by co-sponsoring legislation, conducting oversight hearings, and responding to the environmental challenges of my own community. I am proud to have strongly advocated for severe penalties, following egregious incidents including a 27,000 gallon diesel fuel spill near Gravesend Bay and an apartment complex which illegally discharged 200,000 gallons of raw sewage into Coney Island Creek on a daily basis, and to work with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to ensure that the fines and penalties associated with their enforcement actions are returned to the Coney Island-Gravesend community, to address longstanding environmental needs in the community.**  **In my capacity as Chair of the Committee on Recovery and Resiliency, I have held oversight hearings on diverse topics that fit under a holistic pro-environment agenda, targeting the health and well-being of New Yorkers, the strength and resiliency of our neighborhoods, and building a vibrant local economy. From my first hearing, highlighting the unacceptable conditions caused by inefficient, dirty provisional hearing systems in Hurricane Sandy-impacted NYCHA developments, to my most recent hearing, examining the resiliency, reliability, and sustainability of New York City’s electrical system in light of the scheduled closure of Indian Point, I have attempted to illuminate and explore the tangible quality of life and public health impacts that our resiliency and sustainability policies have, both for current and future generations.** |

**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*](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NYC_Agenda_FINAL.pdf) *when formulating your responses.*)

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

1. Water Quality — Every New Yorker has the right to clean drinking water and waterways

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| I am highly committed to safeguarding our drinking water quality, encouraging water conservation, and working to expand our swimmable and fishable waterways. I worked with the Mayor’s Office of Recovery and Resiliency to secure $15 million in HUD Community Development Block Grant (Disaster Recovery) funding to install bioswales throughout the Coney Island peninsula. While this, ultimately, was deemed to be infeasible by NYC DEP, I fought to keep that funding dedicated to green infrastructure improvements in Coney Island. I have also worked with my state legislative counterpart, Assemblywoman Pamela Harris, to introduce legislation that would incentivize homeowners to replace impermeable surface coverings with absorbent materials by offering a property tax credit. On a smaller scale, my office conducts rain barrel giveaways each year, and distributed the largest number of rain barrels of any of the Council offices in 2016.  In addition, I am passionate about working to bring our waterways – to the greatest degree possible – up to the swimmable and fishable standard. In Southern Brooklyn, our City’s limited progress towards these goals increases public health risks. Despite the fact that they are not classified as either swimmable or fishable waterways, both Gravesend Bay and Coney Island Creek are significantly used by the local community – environmental stewardship education, religious rites, and both subsistence and low-volume commercial fishing occur in these waterways. Our failure to meet the swimmable goal means that any recreational or commercial activity in these waterways – sites of recent and ongoing environmental issues, including a 27,000 gallon diesel oil spill and daily discharges of hundreds of thousands of gallons of raw sewage – carries health risks. At the moment, my office is working on a stop-gap measure to curb the immediate hazards: signs which would warn would-be fishermen and bathers of health and safety risks associated with elevated fecal coliform levels and industrial chemical spills. In the longer term, however, we need to be working to clean up our polluted bodies of water, so that the public can make full and active use of our waterways. I will advocate for our City and State to devote more resources to bring our many waterways closer to compliance with the Clean Water Act. |

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

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| As someone who suffered from childhood asthma, air quality is a major concern of mine. I am proud to co-sponsor Introductions 978-2015 and 385-2014, both of which seek to improve indoor air quality by aggressively targeting mold. Even with the NYCHA mold abatement settlement, my office regularly sees complaints from NYCHA residents about mold infestations that recur within a short period after initial treatment, because remediation efforts only addressed visible mold, neglecting the source. I fully support the development of a comprehensive indoor air quality monitoring program. Additionally, I would absolutely support expanding our DOHMH Community Air Quality Surveys to include additional pollutants, because more expansive data will help us better target our efforts to improve air quality.  To the end of decreasing emissions and particulate matter that reduce air quality, I have co-sponsored bills including Introduction 1124-2016, which will increase the availability of charging stations for electric vehicles, and Introduction 211-2014, which requires the City to develop a Bus Rapid Transit plan, which will decrease reliance on private cars by improving our public transit options. |

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

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| Access to fresh, healthy, local food is a major issue in my district: Bensonhurst has the second lowest supermarket square footage per capita in our city, with Coney Island, Gravesend, and Sea Gate faring only slightly better. In my first term, I fought to keep existing supermarkets open. If I am elected to a second term, I will look to see how I can partner with NYCEDC’s FRESH initiative to bring smaller, high-quality food shops to my area, and to expand the program’s capacity.  In my first year in office, I actively sought to bring many different GrowNYC programs to my district. Unfortunately, the organization previously lacked the capacity to operate in Coney Island, where moderate-to-high rates of diabetes and obesity speak to the pressing need to offer better food options. I will fight to make sure that the technology is in place to allow our residents to use SNAP/EBT to pay at all farmer’s markets and Green Carts; in 2017, with many economical options for locally-grown, fresh produce, there is no reason why fresh, healthy food should be out of reach for low-income New Yorkers. |

1. Green Buildings – 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

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| I support the application of robust energy efficiency measures to help improve the resiliency of our homes. In this term, I co-sponsored Introduction 739-2015, which would establish a solar ombudsman, whose office would assist with streamlining the permitting process for individuals who would like to install solar power systems on their properties.  If I am elected to a second term, I would work to expand the capacity of the NYC Retrofit Accelerator, which does crucial work in guiding buildings through the process of energy efficient retrofitting, including connecting buildings with cash incentives and financing to reduce the short-term financial cost of retrofitting. As the representative of many large, low-to-moderate income subsidized apartment complexes that were built primarily in the 1960s and 70s, I know how crucial incentives, financing, and subsidies for energy efficient retrofits are to ensuring that the immediate major capital investment costs do not result in a rent or carrying charge increase, potentially pricing residents out of their homes before they can reap the benefits of energy efficient building systems.  I will also look at the remaining 53 recommendations from the Urban Green Council’s Green Codes Task Force, to attempt to codify more of the proposals, including construction waste recycling, and examine ways that I can personally advance the goals of the recommendations, such as insisting that Environmental Impact Statements for proposed rezonings in my district take climate change into consideration. I will do the same for the remaining 10 recommendations from their Building Resiliency Task Force; on an individual level, I have worked to ensure that new trees scheduled to be planted in flood-vulnerable Coney Island are flood and saltwater resistant. |

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

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

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| I am a strong believer that well-maintained, well-programmed green spaces are integral to building healthy, resilient communities. To that end, I have been an extremely vocal advocate for truly equitable Parks funding throughout our city. In my district, Dreier Offerman/Calvert Vaux was promised of millions of dollars in capital improvements by the Bloomberg administration at the same time as Bushwick Inlet Park was being proposed, as part of an effort to bolster large, regional parks; the upgrades to Dreier Offerman/Calvert Vaux never materialized, and it remains underutilized, and in severe disrepair.  The Parks capital process is in desperate need of reform, given that relatively modest construction projects – like building a comfort station – stretch out over several years, encounter endemic delays, and end up costing millions of dollars. I would support the baselining of the Parks capital project, so that our Parks are not as dependent on discretionary allocations from individual Council Members with relatively limited discretionary budgets. I was also a co-sponsor of Introduction 154-2014, a reporting bill on Parks maintenance, capital projects, and PEP officers. The annual reports generated by this law should help us evaluate whether Parks Department resources are truly being spent equitably throughout the city. |

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

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| I am fortunate to have several highly committed public trust activists in my community. When working with them to improve and expand public access to our waterways, I was taken aback by the number of overlapping bureaucracies that govern our waterfronts. In order for our city’s massive, diverse, and rich waterfront to fulfill its potential, one agency should be designated to oversee the waterfront. In my district, I would support a “town dock” or similar public infrastructure that facilitates access to our waterways and may be part of a larger network of docks for human-powered watercraft. |

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

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| Transportation is a high priority for me. A majority of my constituents are forced to rely on private cars as their primary means of commuting, because of the unreliability of certain segments of our mass transit system, and the length of commutes from far Southern Brooklyn. I have been a vocal advocate for improved service that would help tilt commuters’ cost-benefit analysis of transit options in favor of public transit, including restoring the F-Express service, expanding Bus Rapid Transit, improving existing bus service, and bringing a new NYC Ferry route to Coney Island. To achieve improved public transit, it is crucial that the MTA have access to sufficient funding to meet its capital needs. Given ever-increasing MTA subway and bus fares, our Commuter Benefits Law is a common-sense way to help keep fares more affordable, through pre-tax payroll deductions.  For drivers, pedestrians, and bike riders, the disrepair of our roads and sidewalks often borders on hazardous – requests for repaving or filling of pot holes, and reports of damaged sidewalks and curbs make up a significant portion of the cases my office sees, and works with NYC DOT on.  Vision Zero is a vital set of tools for addressing traffic death. I fully support and will advocate for city control over speed limits, as well as the number, placement, and hours of operation of enforcement cameras. |

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

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| As the current chair of the Council’s Committee on Recovery and Resiliency, helping our communities recover from the catastrophic damage of Hurricane Sandy and rebuild stronger, and better able to withstand a variety of catastrophic events has been a significant priority of mine in my first term. We have begun to work with City Planning to understand how a new Flood Resilient Zoning Code might help strengthen the ability of new or substantially altered buildings in the flood plain to withstand storm surges and other inclement weather.  I have worked with the Mayor’s Office of Recovery and Resiliency to ensure that $15 million slated for green infrastructure improvements in Coney Island be used to bolster the shoreline of Coney Island Creek, including restoring its ecological vibrancy. My early advocacy also resulted NYCEDC launching and completing a study for a Coney Island Creek coastal protection plan. The findings of that study have since been incorporated into the United States Army Corps’ study on Rockaway-Jamaica Bay, creating a real possibility for an integrated coastal protection plan that stretches from Eastern Queens to Bensonhurst-Gravesend.  Nearly five years after Hurricane Sandy, I am glad to see that construction has finally begun at three of the nine Sandy-impacted NYCHA developments in my district, and am pleased that those buildings are slated to see cleaner, cheaper, more resilient heating and energy systems installed under a HUD Energy Performance Contract, which will allow cost savings within a specified period to be redirected to NYCHA. In addition, I am closely monitoring the changing situation in Washington, D.C., as early reports and the White House’s skinny budget indicate the possibility of draconian budget cuts both at HUD and at FEMA that would be disastrous for our city’s resiliency and emergency management goals. |

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

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

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| I recognize the exigent need our city has to rehabilitate and expand existing infrastructure, as well as to prioritize investments in new infrastructure projects, many of which seek to alleviate decades-old problems. Our roadways, freight, and commuter transportation infrastructure all need to be modernized. We need a 5 year capital plan for our city’s streets, just as the MTA has a 5 year capital plan. The Gateway Tunnel, West Side access, and the new Moynihan Station all are important projects towards improving regional connectivity, and reducing both commuter and commercial motor vehicle traffic throughout our city. We need to invest in our water and sewer infrastructure, including insuring resiliency and redundancy in our water supply system by completing Water Tunnel #3, setting a timeline for repairing Water Tunnels #1 and 2, and upgrading our water and sewer distribution network, so that our existing infrastructure is capable of handling the higher volumes that will be needed to serve New York’s increasing population.  Given that my district contains a number of areas of environmental concern, I would be very supportive of efforts to expand capacity and staffing at the Office of Environmental Remediation. This City Council has done good legislative work, highlighting environmental justice concerns. However, we could and should be devoting more resources to the remediation of known environmental hazards.  Lastly, I have been very vocal about my belief that our city should be doing more to lead the way in renewable energy generation and sustainable construction. If we have the ability to generate clean energy within the city – be it through photovoltaic installations on public buildings, offshore wind farms, or using the East River’s tides to generate hydroelectric power – we should invest in those projects. It will help us reduce our use of fossil fuels, without depending on other jurisdictions to invest in new long-distance transmission systems. It will also bolster a relatively new, high-growth sector of our city’s economy, creating good jobs that we desperately need, given the increased pressures on manufacturing businesses in our city. |

1. 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

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| Solid Waste Management is a strong area of interest of mine, as the Southwest Brooklyn Marine Transfer station is just outside of my district, and many of my constituents remember the Southwest Brooklyn Incinerator, which burned close to 10% of the City’s trash for the 30 years it operated in Gravesend. I understand and empathize with the concerns of my colleagues in North Brooklyn, Eastern Queens, and the South Bronx, whose districts are overburdened by waste transfer stations. However, I believe there is an exigent, existential need for our city to aggressively pursue policies that will lead to an overall reduction in solid waste and in the amount of waste that we are sending to landfills. I support efforts to set serious, short-term goals for improving our diversion rates, and the programs that are necessary for us to achieve our goals. In Community District 13, I am pleased that we now have curbside organics collection, although more needs to be done to ensure that residents of large buildings can and know how to participate. I will also support further efforts to increase commercial and construction waste recycling. |

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

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| From Build it Back to NYCHA Sandy Recovery work to the installation of photovoltaic capacity on City-owned property, I have very vocally advocated for the need to leverage planned resiliency and sustainability investments to create opportunities for local residents to access meaningful career pathways. If residents do not currently have the necessary qualifications to be hired on a job site, then we need to expand high-quality training opportunities. Given that the green economy will likely play an increasingly large role in our economy, our City needs to be invest heavily in training opportunities that are targeted to green jobs, and needs to holistically evaluate the many job training, career readiness, and CTE programs that it currently funds to identify opportunities to integrate green skills into curricula.  As we continue to install solar panels on public buildings, we need to be making sure that we are training our residents to install and maintain those solar panels. We need to examine the Career and Technical Education opportunities available to our public high school students, and make sure that the programs we are offering are aligned to the modern economy. Green City Force has been doing great work for a number of years, training youth to work on environmental and sustainability projects. The Mayor’s newly launched NYC Green Jobs Corps will help train workers to be competitive for green jobs, and its partnership with the Building and Construction Trades Council to provide pre-apprenticeship programs tailored to green jobs is very promising. |