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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
	+ 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](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**

Candidate Name: Melinda Katz
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Campaign Manager’s name and email: Aaron Hecht, aaron@redhorsestrategies.com
Press Secretary’s name and email:
Scheduler’s name and email:

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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| Since drafting my Plan for a Green Queens with NYLCV in 2013 I have working to implement many of the ideas in the plan. We’re focused on planting new trees and working to make government rooftops be painted an energy-saving white. I also want to allocate more park space, make Queens government buildings more energy efficient and lead regular electronic waste drives. These are simple steps we can take locally that will improve our environment globally and this is the innovative approach our borough needs as we fight to create green jobs and expand the green-collar industry in Queens. |

**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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| Water Quality is an important issue and I have been working in partnership with several local activists (Guardians of Flushing, RiverKeeper, SWIM coalition, Friends of Flushing), to raise awareness and create plans to improve the quality of our water. Together we’ve held community meetings and have also been in conversations with the Department of Environmental Protection which is now planning for long-term water quality improvements.In the reconstruction of the parking lot on Little Bay Park, we have installed 29 retention tanks that will capture and manage 100% of the site’s water runoff. The tanks are able to capture a deluge of storm water and gradually release it back into the ground. |

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

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| On Little Bay Park we also placed Bio-Swales between the parking areas and there we have planted numerous perennials, grasses, trees and shrubs that help manage water and also improve the air quality.Preserving all our parks and green zones is crucial to having a better quality of air, I have been very invested in preserving these spaces, and investments have been made towards the maintenance and upkeep of our trees and flora.  |

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

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| I strongly support local businesses and I think a key component for success is to have access to healthy food. We have held Safety Education Workshops with the Health Department to make sure that all or local businesses have the proper licenses and outstanding grades by the Health Department.  |

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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| In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, I convened a task force that urged the Department of City Planning introduced the Citywide Flood Resilience Text Amendment that allows home and business owners to elevate or reconstruct their homes with inclusion of legally non-compliant and legally non-confirming structures, protecting them from future storms.  |

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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| Queens has the highest parkland acreage of any borough, which is why I have dedicated over $96.5 million in capital improvements for our parks. This including the 464 parks, playgrounds, triangles and malls. The Community Boards have brought to our attention that some of these open spaces, particularly public school open facilities remain difficult to access due to school holidays and weekends denying access to open space. I remain focused on ensuring that the parks are adequately funded, maintained and accessible to residents throughout the year. We’ve been working on initiatives like Summer Festivals in partnership with the New York City Parks Department, City Parks Foundation and Summer Stage.  |

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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| Our concern doesn’t end with having better water, we are also working towards preserving the waterfront. For this purpose, we have held fundraising events on the waterfront (Fun Run) to help Guardians of Flushing advocate for the waterways and the water front but also to raise awareness and a sense of community. |

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

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| Our communities can’t grow without transportation, our economy can’t grow without transportation and we can’t have a high quality of life without safe, affordable and reliable public transportation. The Rockaway Ferry needs to be permanent, it has been a great help for our communities and I’m confident will help our economy. Additionally, creating more bike lanes in Western Queens will not only provide more transportation for our communities but also make streets safer. |

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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| We are still recovering from the long-term effects of the Superstorm Sandy and we have made significant investments in housing and economic development, but it doesn’t end there. I have convened twice-monthly meetings focused on recovery from the superstorm - a Hurricane task force and Beach Channel Street Raising task force. Monthly meetings of the hurricane task force since February 2014 focused on identifying issues and solving problems. This meeting brings together civics, elected officials and city agencies responsible for the hurricane recovery effort, including build it back and mayor's office of resiliency. The two most significant accomplishments are SBA loans that were applied for by Build it Back applicants and not drawn down are no longer viewed by the programs as funds you received. This allowed applicants who were previously deemed ineligible to apply for construction help and reimbursement. Second, the Department of City Planning introduced the Citywide Flood Resilience Text Amendment that allows home and business owners to elevate or reconstruct their homes with inclusion of legally non-compliant and legally non-confirming structures. The Broad Channel Street Raising task force is a shared street project lead by DDC and DOT, raising 9 streets in two phases to make the area more resilient to Jamaica Bay flooding during high tides and storms. Both of these task forces have ultimately been a force for more resilient homes, business and neighborhoods.  |

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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| Elevating West 11th and 19th Roads is an improvement not only to the quality of life of our communities but also an improvement to our infrastructure. We need to encourage green building of environmentally sustainable buildings and housing, which will serve to create good union jobs and a path to the middle class for many families while helping the environment.  |

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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| The population of western Queens is increasing rapidly with thousands of new apartments, new business centers and major attractions. The Department of Sanitation needs to increase services and the City needs to enforce illegal dumping laws. We also need to look at a more equitable distribution of which communities shoulder the brunt of solid waste management. |

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

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| My office has held numerous job fairs where business who provide these types of jobs, as well other types of businesses, have help our unemployed or underemployed workforce find jobs. Many of the events we have pre-screened applicants to match their skills to job openings. Additionally, I have directed capital investments in hospitals, parks and libraries to create good paying jobs in the green construction industry.  |