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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: Ritchie Torres
Office Sought (district if applicable): Re-Election to City Council in City Council District 15
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Twitter handle: @RitchieTorres
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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| Since being elected to the City Council I have made it a point to stand up for our most vulnerable residents. I have fought for more representation among constituents, particularly the poor, and for renovations to public housing. These fights are directly linked to standing up to the influence of big-monied interests that are letting our most vulnerable residents suffer from health problems related to pollution and that promote anti-environment agendas. Throughout my time on the Council, I have consistently sponsored pro-environment legislation that has earned me a 100% score from the NYLCV. |

**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 strongly committed to ensuring every New Yorker has access to clean water. As a major part of my campaign to fix and protect the living conditions of residents throughout the city, I worked with my fellow Council Members to conduct a door-to-door survey of NYCHA residents that revealed 63% had damages or contaminates that were unattended to by NYCHA. This includes exposure to high levels of lead in drinking water. I have worked on legislation to address these issues, and will continue to once re-elected to the City Council. |

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

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| I am absolutely committed to clean air for all, and am actively working on legislation to address high levels of asthma and mold remediation in public housing. Studies show that residents living in poorer areas, like in NYCHA developments, are more at risk of breathing polluted air and therefore have worse health outcomes. I have sponsored legislation to not only improve the quality of the air we breathe, but also to fix the underlying conditions and health effects caused by dirty air. Additionally, I’m the lead sponsor of legislation that would prevent power plants from using dirty oil that pollute our air. All residents have a right to breathe clean air, regardless where they live in the City, and I’ll continue to fight for this in the Council. |

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

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| Access to healthy and nutritious foods is an ongoing problem in the Bronx, and one that I take very seriously. Since my first year in Office, I’ve allocated discretionary funds to the **HealthBucks Program**- a coupon that allows residents to buy healthy foods at any farmers market in the Bronx. HealthBucks are free, extremely popular and important to my constituents, and I will continue to provide them throughout my time in Office. I also support farmers markets and green gardens in my district, and seek to provide operators with access to the resources they need to be successful. I am also a strong supporter of initiatives that teach residents how to cook healthy foods for their families, and support various programs that provide culinary instruction to public housing residents. |

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 raising our standards on energy efficiency, both retroactively and with new building projects, and am pushing for NYCHA developments to be more energy efficient and sustainable. Throughout my first term, I’ve advocated for greener and more energy efficient systems at NYCHA, and am pushing for more efficient, sustainable lighting. I believe that raising energy standards and improving energy efficiency not only saves money, but will improve the health of residents and improve their living conditions. We cannot continue to invest in forms of energy that are not sustainable and renewable.  |

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 advocate of clean and safe parks, and that is why every year I allocate funds to the Parks Department to improve the parks throughout my District. While parks in wealthier districts have more resources and are better maintained, I believe that every resident should have access to a clean park no matter where they live. While negotiating the redevelopment of Lambert Houses in the West Farms neighborhood, I was able to secure $300,000 to improve a park in the community, among other benefits for residents. I always seek to put investment in parks as a priority when new developments want approval. I also sponsored legislation to fix the Parks Department’s capital process, timeliness of renovations and other measures that would improve how the Department operates and how our parks are maintained. |

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 will continue to support initiatives and legislation that ensure every New Yorker has access to clean waterways. With so many shore fronts throughout our city it is unacceptable that so many have high levels of contaminants and waste. We must continue to push for more action to be taken to clean-up the City’s waterways. I also support ferry extension to the Bronx to ensure that residents can have an option of water transportation to various points in the City.  |

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

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| While we fight for affordable housing throughout every borough – it is easy to lose sight of how transportation to and from that housing impacts residents. The Bronx is far from many of the jobs in the city and those same residents are too far from trains or buses, exacerbating the length of their commutes and decreasing their quality of life. I support upgrading and investing in our City’s transportation options, and offering new options to residents living in transit deserts. For example, expanding CitiBike to the Bronx, providing more bike lanes, expanding ferry routes to the Bronx, and providing subsidized Metrocards to low-income commuters.  |

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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| This is a very important issue for me. Many areas of the Bronx are often the last to see their power restored in the case of a power outage in extreme weather. When poor residents who are already living paycheck to paycheck are suddenly left without electricity and water for days at a time simply because of their zip code, we place an unwarranted burden on those who are already the most vulnerable. We must invest in more equitable response plans and work with city companies to ensure no borough is left behind in the event of utility failures during inclement weather. |

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 believe more investment is needed to upgrade the City’s infrastructure to better serve residents and maintain NYC at the cutting-edge of the global economy. Investments are not only monetary, but can be adjusting the laws that may keep the City from advancing. I support advancing policies that now only create good-paying jobs, but also promote green standards and maintain the City’s competitiveness.  |

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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| We absolutely need to revisit our waste management programs. The current system smacks of environmental racism and exploits poor residents’ lack of ability to fight back against un-equitable distribution of waste management facilities. The city must improve its waste management systems in order to save millions of dollars, generate green jobs, and reduce health disparities in overburdened areas.  |

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

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| I support various initiatives and organizations that provide workforce training to residents to take on green jobs. For example, I’m very involved with Green City Force and their mission to train young NYCHA residents to tackle environmental issues in public housing and prepare them for green jobs and careers. These jobs are the jobs of the future, and will open many doors for future New Yorkers. |