



30 Broad Street – 30th Floor
New York, NY 10004
212-361-6350
politics@nylcv.org
www.nylcv.org

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: Robert Calarco

Office Sought (district if applicable): Suffolk County Legislator LD 3

E-mail: robcalarco@gmail.com

Mailing Address: PO Box 255, Patchogue, NY 11772

Phone: 631-523-1586

Website: robcalarco.com

Facebook Page: robcalarco

Twitter handle: @robcalarco

Campaign Manager's name and email: Eva Greguski, erodgreg@gmail.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.

As a Suffolk County Legislator, I have a history of supporting a wide array of pro-environment legislation that aims to protect our drinking water, our bays and rivers, to preserving open space, to addressing hazardous toys, reducing the proliferation of single use bags, and investing in green infrastructure. Most recently, Suffolk County created a program to provide funding for a grant program so homeowners can upgrade their septic systems with advance treatment systems that greatly reduce nitrogen levels. As a county that exists on the eastern edge of Long Island the water is all around us, and yet our only drinking water comes from an aquifer. We have to be mindful of our impact on our water sources. Further, climate change and sea level rise can have dramatic impacts on our region. Given the current expectations from the national government on the issues, local regions will have to continue to lead on this important issue.

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

Suffolk County does not have regulation over land use and hence the siting of energy sources. Our Planning Commission did recently help craft a code for siting commercial solar projects which has been adopted by many towns that does help

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

Suffolk recently created a program for replacing septic systems with advanced treatment systems. The current funding of \$2M came from a portion of the voter approved ¼% sales tax for sewer infrastructure and septic replacement. I am hopeful that we will be able to obtain a large portion of the recent NYS approved \$2.5 Billion water quality bond. As we progress and fine tune the program we will need to determine the best mechanism for a long term funding stream as most of Suffolk County will rely advanced septic systems as opposed to sewers.

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, as well as the second line to Ronkonkoma, but do not represent the areas.

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

I support having the county find ways to create this infrastructure as we pursue future road projects in the appropriate places. However, I think Town zoning codes will have the larger impact.

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

Density is regulated by Town code, however, I have recently authored resolution to ensure that projects that connect out of district to county sewer infrastructure creates affordable housing opportunities. My resolution provides for reduced connection fees in return for additional affordable units that rent for actual affordable levels. By encouraging connection to a district, we accomplish better water treatment and increased density and affordable units from a project.

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

I fully support the creation of the north-south Bus Rapid Transit project for the Nicolls Road corridor. This project will start in Patchogue's downtown and connect to McArthur Airport, the Ronkonkoma Hub, Suffolk Community College and Stony Brook University. Offering the first efficient north-south transportation system that will allow residents of Patchogue's downtown to work in Stony Brook without getting into a car. I have already helped to further a road project that will incorporate the Patchogue Terminus for the BRT route.

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

Suffolk has been a leader in purchasing open space, and we continue to make yearly investments into acquiring parcels, which I have always supported. It is up to the Towns to develop clustering codes, but I fully support create land use to encourage developments with smaller footprints that then allow for environmental resources as well as small parks around the development.

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

Every year Suffolk spends, and I support, \$2 million in our capital budget in energy efficiency projects, and will spend \$3 million next year. We have installed solar projects in some of our parking fields, with the potential to expand in other areas. We have made yearly investments in hybrid vehicles, though recent federal action will make that investment more difficult. I supported various programs created to encourage parks use, including a parks passport and a blue ways trails programs for Suffolk County.

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

Suffolk has adopted LEED standards for the construction of new buildings and make significant investment into retrofits and upgrades for our existing buildings to reduce energy use. In addition, the I voted for a proposal two years ago to create a funding mechanism for commercial properties to secure low interest loans for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. The loans are guaranteed by the county who can place tax liens for nonpayment. This method of financing makes the loans easier to obtain and at much lower interest rates than traditional programs. This summer I am hosting a business forum and will have greening your business as its own information session for attendees.

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

As mentioned above I supported the recently created Septic replacement program, and open space preservation. I helped secure \$18 M in funding to connect 650 homes in the south of Patchogue Village to the sewer plant, as this properties are all within the 0-1 year contributing areas to surface waters. Protecting our water must be a number one priority for our region.

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

I recently became a trustee for the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District. This new role has been very enlightening for me to learn of the types of resources available for helping land owners develop best management practices. Unlike the eastern portion of Suffolk that has traditional farming operations western Suffolk has other uses that I think should take advantage of the resources. Everything from small horse farms, to landscape and greenhouse facilities (especially those that mulch) all of which have potential impacts on the neighborhoods and environment around them. I hope to help develop an outreach program to this operators in the future to see how the District can be more active in these areas.

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

I am a big proponent of working to protect our local farmland and the ability to produce food locally. Suffolk has makes yearly investments in purchasing development rights from farmland to keep it in agricultural production in perpetuity. I am lucky to also represent an area that is doing creative work on this measure, not only by setting up farmer markets, but the Patchogue Medford Library has started a seed library. It is ventures like these the bring food production back to people's back yards that will help promote investment in protecting our agricultural resources and give people access the healthy nutritious foods.