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## 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](mailto: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](mailto:jklainberg@nylcv.org))

**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.

Water quality has been and continues to be of great importance to me considering the challenges we have faced with high nitrogen levels impacting our waterways and the ripple effect that has had on our environment, economy and quality of life. During my first term as a legislator, I was able to secure more than \$4,500,000 in funding to upgrade the Northport's Sewage Treatment Plant. This upgrade has paid off in great dividends. Since the upgrade there has been no red-tide in the harbor and the amount of nitrogen loading was reduced from 19.4 lbs per day down to an average of 7.5 lbs per day. This great success led to the opening of the Centerport Yacht Club Beach which had been closed for 7 years due to water quality concerns.

I have sponsored several pieces of legislation toward the goal of improving and protecting our water quality including:

- banning the sale of hydro-fracking by-products in Suffolk County, which prohibits the introduction of

natural gas waste into any waste-water treatment facility within the County of Suffolk or operated by the County of Suffolk and the sale of natural gas waste in Suffolk County. It also prohibits the application of natural gas waste on any road or real property located in Suffolk County. I also successfully sponsored legislation that increased the fines from \$5,000 to \$25,000 for offenders of the law. As an island that relies on our sole source aquifer for our drinking water, these laws are critical to ward off such destructive practices.

- I was the lead sponsor for IR 1565-2013, which created the Long Island Commission on Aquifer Protection (LICAP) a joint initiative between Nassau and Suffolk Counties to protect Long Island's sole-source aquifer. This bi-county committee is made up of experts in this field who are working on solutions to threats to our aquifer.
- I advocated for a county grant for the Nature Conservancy in Cold Spring Harbor to upgrade their cesspool to a nitrogen reducing wastewater wetland system.
- In 2016 I sponsored a resolution to place a 5 cent fee on all carry out bags in retail stores to reduce waste generated from single-use plastic bags beginning January 1, 2018. Considering that plastic bags account for 10% of the debris that washes up on our nation's coastline I worked with multiple stakeholders to craft legislation to reduce our use of them.

Lastly, I cherish our environment and waterways and understand our interconnectedness. Over the years Suffolk county has taken great strides to honor that connection in advancing policies that protect and improve our environment and I would like to continue working as a legislator to serve that cause.

1.

### 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

I am committed advocating for and creating opportunities for expanding renewable power. Suffolk County is the largest municipality in NYS to sign on to the Green Energy Program which will allow local businesses to participate in the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program. The program helps to finance energy improvements.

1.

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

I am totally committed to identifying and supporting financing mechanisms to replace failing septic systems. This year it was my pleasure to vote in support a \$10 million grant program to help homeowners pay for upgraded septic systems that will reduce nitrogen loading by at least 50%. With on-site waste water systems being the number 1 contributor to nitrogen pollution, this is a step in the right direction. It is my hope that these installations will happen quickly and we continue to fund programs such as this to help protect and improve our drinking water and surface waters.

1.

4. LIRR Third Track: Ensuring the Long Island Rail Road completes a planned third main line track from Floral Park to Hicksville

I am committed to enhancing our public transportation system and support the 3rd track. This is a smart infrastructure project as it will expand the LIRR's commuter capacity which will be good for our economy and environment.

1.

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

With limited public transportation options and a heavy reliance on cars, reducing our carbon footprint through expansion of EV infrastructure is an important part of combatting climate change. So I support the development of a larger network of charging stations for all users.

1.

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

Our land use decisions have a direct impact on our economy, quality of life and our cherished environment. Creating livable and sustainable communities can enhance those critical aspects or, they can be a detriment. My district is home to several great downtowns with easy access to the LIRR. Each of these downtowns have their own unique qualities and bring together diverse uses among the residential options and the array of small businesses. They are great examples of higher density planning that offer public transportation and access to the city and allow us to preserve our park and open spaces that protect our environment. I have worked hard to ensure the sustainability in Northport Village with the funding for their STP improvements and I am working to extend the sewer line south of the train station in Huntington Station so there can be economic growth in that corridor.

1.

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

Because public transportation options remove cars from the road it is a plus for the environment as it reduces our carbon footprint. I fully support our Suffolk County bus system and advocated to get more state funding for our system. We were successful in stalling the cuts as we received more STOA funds and the reduction in fuel prices lowered our operating costs, but unfortunately the cuts took place. With ride sharing companies coming into the market, I'd like to see a portion on the revenue generated to go toward public transportation. I will also continue appealing to the state to get more funding for our bus system.

I also support County Executive Steve Bellone's Connect Long Island; a major component of this plan is developing north/south mass transit connections between key County assets and existing east/west transportation modes, such as LIRR. With no north/south mass transit connection, residents rely on their automobiles which adds tremendously to our carbon footprint.

1.

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

I support and am committed to preserving our open-space through various mechanisms such as clustering, utilizing small lots for pocket parks as well as through land acquisition or purchase of development rights,. Being in the western section of Suffolk County where it is mostly developed, open space is more of a challenge. I am proud to have worked with the state, town and the North Shore Land Alliance to preserve Wawapek Nature Preserve, a 32 acre parcel. It is a wonderful parcel that future generations will continue to visit and learn to care for the wonders of our natural environment. I have also worked to purchase the development rights from Tilden Farm in Greenlawn so that it may remain a farm for future generations.

1.

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

I am committed to deploying resources and spending money wisely in an effort in order to have less of an impact on the environment.

1.

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

I am committed to promoting energy efficiency in all settings. I voted to approve a local law authorizing tax exemptions for improvements to real property which meet LEED certification standards.

1.

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

Aquifer protection has been a focus of mine as a legislator but I have also advocated for the protection for recreation purposes with legislation that passed to ban the sale of formaldehyde for use in holding tanks. I sponsored the bill after learning about the impacts of formaldehyde derivatives and other chemicals that cause harm to the environment and the bacteria used in the sewage treatment process.

1.



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

It was from a regional perspective that I worked with Nassau County and formed the Long Island Commission on Aquifer Protection (LICAP) a joint initiative between Nassau and Suffolk Counties to protect Long Island's sole-source aquifer. Keeping in mind that our aquifer system and environment know no political boundaries, it is incumbent upon us to work collaboratively, across our region.

1.

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

As the chair of the Suffolk County Health Committee I strongly support the activities of the Food Policy Council for Suffolk County. Their purpose of the council is to help promote local and regional sustainably grown, harvested or produced food within the food system, and encourage local businesses to distribute and promote these foods in every community, especially the underserved communities in Suffolk County.

1.