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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](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/LIChapterAgenda16-17.pdf)
* Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg ([jklainberg@nylcv.org](mailto:jklainberg@nylcv.org))

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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 a lifelong resident of Long Island, I know just how lucky we are to live in one of the most beautiful and diverse regions in the United States. Similarly, I am very aware of the precarious position of our most cherished natural resources. Whether the threats come from the lack of adequate infrastructure, natural forces, or the negligence of humans, much needs to be done in order to ensure that what we enjoy and rely upon today remains sustainable for future generations. This played a tremendous role in my desire to become a New York State legislator, as it does today in my candidacy for Supervisor of the Town of Huntington.**  **By serving in the New York State Assembly, I have had the opportunity to tackle some of the most formidable challenges related to our environment. Some of my legislative accomplishments include, but are not limited to: 1) The passage of the Long Island Water Quality Act; 2) The creation of the New York State Ocean Acidification Task Force to study ocean acidification and determine the corrective steps needed; and 3) The 2017 Budget – which includes $2.5 billion dedicated to improving the quality of water on Long Island.**  **However, my support for environmental legislation represents only a part of my efforts to establish a more environmentally-friendly New York. For example, this past March, I co-hosted a Long Island Green Homes Forum to inform the community on techniques that can reduce their carbon footprints. Also, I have consistently been an advocate for research and development related to alternative energy. When I attended the ribbon-cutting for the opening of the solar car ports at SUNY Farmingdale, I expressed how it was not only an important step towards saving our environment, but one that would inspire future generations.**  **I would be remiss to leave out my earlier environmental efforts that occurred prior to becoming an Assemblyman. While serving as a Trustee on the South Huntington School Board, I worked tirelessly to make the schools in the district more efficient by utilizing some of the best technology available at the time. By creating a more efficient infrastructure in the schools, we not only saved the taxpayers’ money, but we demonstrated to the children the feasibility and importance of being environmentally conscious.**  **Additionally, as an educator, I know just have critically important it is to provide our future generations with the knowledge they will need to become the environmental stewards we need them to be. Therefore, my unwavering commitment to education and its role in achieving increased sustainability will continue in Town Hall.** |

**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](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/LIChapterAgenda16-17.pdf))

1. Expanding Renewable Power: Streamlining and standardizing regulations that will spur innovation and wide-spread adoption in the residential and commercial sectors

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| **Every year, our knowledge of renewable energy increases, as does the availability of related technologies. However, I do not believe that we have utilized these technological achievements to the extent that we should. Part of the reason for this may in large part be due to a variety of onerous regulations that prevent residents and businesses from utilizing certain state-of-the-art equipment. Of course, our regulations should always bear in mind the concerns of safety, but this does not mean modernization cannot occur in a responsible way.**  **If elected as the Huntington Town Supervisor, I will not only make sure that an effort is made to modernize applicable parts of the Town Code, but I will work with other municipalities to establish similar changes. Moreover, providing some incentives would be something to consider as well, such as tax rebates. I believe that if we approach this issue in a multijurisdictional manner, we will provide conditions that are more conducive to making green technology commonplace.** |

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

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| **Long Island is blessed with its robust groundwater system which provides us with the water we use every single day. However, this system is extremely vulnerable to various forms of contamination such as pesticides, runoff, and underground septic systems. Septic systems in particular pose a tremendous problem, especially ones that are not operating properly, or are simply inadequate. When these systems fail or are overburdened, contaminants enter the groundwater and even the larger bodies of water in and around Long Island. One of the most notable contaminants is nitrogen, which can radically alter, and even destroy, a variety of fragile ecosystems. Clearly, something needs to be done, and it has to be sooner than later.**  **The expansion of the sewer system must be a part of the strategy to replace a certain percentage of our septic systems, but this can only be part of the equation as there are fiscal limitations associated. Fortunately, there is a good amount of new and emerging technologies that can make septic systems function in a significantly less harmful manner; we need to bear these in mind and embrace them. Therefore, if elected to the position of Supervisor, I will explore all avenues of possible financing mechanisms. These mechanisms can come in the form of state and federal aid, or tax breaks to those who repair or upgrade their existing systems.** |

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

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| **The use of mass transit in the coming years will play a huge role in reducing our carbon footprint and managing the needs of larger populations. For these reasons, I support the necessary expansion of our railway system to accommodate our current and future needs.** |

1. 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

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| **As alluded to in an earlier question, I was proud to see the installation of the solar carport at SUNY Farmingdale in my district. While the facility provides charging capabilities for a significant part of the Farmingdale community, we simply need to see more throughout Long Island, and certainly in the Town of Huntington. This is another example of an effort that will require a significant degree of inter-municipal cooperation. If elected to the position of Town Supervisor, the expansion of the EV infrastructure will be a necessary component of the larger effort to increase the use of alternative energy sources.** |

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

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| **Our downtown areas here on Long Island have a tremendous amount of potential on a variety of levels – economic, environmental, cultural, etc. In the Town of Huntington in particular, I believe a lot can and should be done to enable residents to make better use of the available forms of public transportation, while also being able to live in a community that is also conducive to walking, biking, etc. Permitting some degree of increased density can be a component of these sustainable communities, but it should only take place after sufficient modifications have been made to the infrastructure.** |

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

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| **Creating and maintaining an infrastructure that suits the needs of the residents and the economy does not have to come at the expense of our environment. By expanding the accessibility to alternative mobility options, we can reduce our reliance on forms of transportation that congest our streets and/or contribute to an unacceptable growth of our carbon footprint. By engaging in these efforts, we will not only protect our environment, but improve our quality of life and encourage the application of other environmentally friendly measures in other realms of society. As suggested in the earlier answers, this is something I support and believe should be a priority of both the public and private sectors.** |

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

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| **The size and density of our communities is growing at a fairly steady pace, and we must ensure that before we get to a point of no return, we carefully consider the related long-term impacts on our environment and quality of life. A significant component of this effort involves the prioritization of open spaces and the preservation of various ecosystems. Whether this involves the establishment and protection of public parks, preserving wetlands, nesting and feeding areas, etc., our strategy needs to be comprehensive and balanced based on both science and the needs of the community at large. We are fortunate here in the Town of Huntington to have residents that value and understand these interests, but our local governments needs to be more proactive. By working with the residents, the business community and governments at the various levels, striking a sustainable balance is certainly possible and something for which I will continue to advocate.** |

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

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| **Our local governments simply need to do more to become more efficient and environmentally friendly. Although we are living in very trying economic times, we can approach this challenge in realistic ways that both saves money and reduces negative impacts on our environment. For example, various forms of technology are already available that can lower our energy costs related to things like lighting, heating, and air-conditioning. By investing in these measure, we will ultimately preserve our environment and simultaneously save the hard-earned money of the taxpayers. Again, these are trying economic times, but better management of available funds can achieve many, if not all, of these aforementioned goals.** |

1. 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

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| **Achieving a more energy efficient community is a challenging endeavor, but it is one that can be surmounted by education and reasonable measures by our government. Education (such as that provided by the Long Island Green Homes Forum – see question1) plays a key role, as our residents deserve to know about their options that can benefit their households and the environment. For example, simple steps to ensure better insulation can be achieved by residents with little or no expense. Furthermore, various incentive programs are accessible to those who install more energy efficient appliances, or who take related steps to increase the overall efficiency of their homes. Similarly, we can better educate the business community and even the various government entities (school districts, villages, etc.) to embrace efficiency and reap similar benefits. The fact of the matter is that if a truly multi-leveled concerted effort takes place, the aggregate positive benefit to our environment and pocketbooks can be quite significant.** |

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

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| **In order to best ensure that our water is safe for drinking, recreation and agriculture, the existing laws on the books at the various levels of government must be fully enforced and updated as needed. Just as important, we must continue to educate the community on proactive steps that can be taken by individuals to prevent contaminants from entering our waterways and groundwater system. Also, as mentioned already, we simply need to do more to address the impact that faulty or inadequate septic systems are having on our water sources. The alarming rates of nitrogen and other contaminants originating from septic systems needs much more attention, and feasible steps must be taken sooner rather than later. Of course, some relief to this particular situation can be found in the expansion of our sewer system, but both education and incentive programs can go a long way.** |

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

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| **The protection of our natural resources is something that is crucially important to our quality of life today, but it is also an obligation we have for future generations. Each community has its own needs, while also having its unique environmental challenges. For example, the Town of Huntington is much more populated today and will likely continue to grow. Comprehensive plans must strive to reduce our reliance on outdated and harmful technologies and strategies, and embrace ones that allow for sustainable growth. Such a plan will necessarily involve the expanded use of alternative energy, establishment of more open space, the protection of wildlife, and a continued effort to better inform the public on positive contributions they can make. This, I believe, is the best means of protecting our air, water, lands, and quality of life for years to come.** |

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

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| **The water we drink and the food we eat are without question keys to a happy and healthy life. Unfortunately, with increased development over the years, there are fewer local producers of food. However, steps need to be taken to protect existing farms, and examine the feasibility of adding more in the near future. Additionally, some alternatives should be considered that will ultimately have the same end result, namely, fresh and healthy food on our tables. For example, more effort should be made to educate our children and the general public on the methods and benefits associated with home gardens; I am an avid home gardener myself. Also, while areas such as Huntington may not have the agricultural presence of yesteryear, many farms here in Suffolk County still produce a wide variety of foods. I think it would be a great idea to expand access to this resource via an increased presence of farmers markets here in Huntington. These events will provide access to the freshest and most delicious foods, while stimulating the surrounding economy at the same time.** |