



NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND

Long Island Chapter Policy Agenda

2023-2024

FOREWORD

Long Island is a community of communities, each one linked to their neighbors through a passion and need for action to improve the environment. There are big issues, but also big solutions that will need real investment. In this New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) Long Island Policy Agenda, in conjunction with the [2023 NYLCV State Policy Agenda](#), we tackle the environmental issues head on. That means reducing our energy demand by promoting efficiency, prioritizing electrification, supporting the construction and operation of offshore wind projects, protecting our estuaries, rehabilitating our water system, reimagining our waste system, protecting and expanding our green spaces, and supporting each community in their journey to become certified as a Climate Smart Community.

Each of the policies we will advocate for will help set Long Island on a path to a more sustainable and vibrant future. We envision drinking water that is free of contaminants, parks and trails that are easily accessible, offshore wind that powers our homes and industries, and an electric vehicle (EV) charging network that gives consumers the confidence

they need to make their first EV purchase. And we can and must take advantage of the billions of dollars of aid available under the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and Inflation Reduction Act, and the State's Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Bond Act to accomplish these goals.

As we advocate for smart environmental policies on Long Island, it is crucial that we prioritize environmental justice and consider the impacts of our actions on marginalized communities. Our push towards a clean energy future must be inclusive and benefit all New Yorkers.

We look forward to working with our partners and local officials to advance these priorities.



JULIE TIGHE
President, NYLCV/EF



Climate Smart Communities

Long Island residents are known for their environmental passion, and it's time for municipalities to step up and deliver for their residents by moving up the ladder of certification in the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program. This Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) program is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by rewarding greenhouse gas-reducing actions. Some progress has been made on Long Island, with 58.8% of communities having taken the first step in becoming a registered CSC. But more progress is needed, as only a handful of communities have made it to the Bronze level

and even fewer to the Silver level. Becoming a DEC-certified CSC shows the commitment of the community to a clean, environmentally-friendly future. NYLCV will:

- Support and campaign for CSC actions like the transition to clean fleets, adopting NY Stretch Energy Codes, training governmental staff on Energy Code Enforcement, converting street lights to LED, and implementing Unified Solar Permitting, among other possible actions.
- Look to achieve Bronze level or higher for 100% of Long Island towns, cities, and counties by 2026.



Energy

OFFSHORE WIND

Long Island has made great progress on creating the energy production sources for the future of the island and the State of New York. Projects like the South Fork Wind Farm, Sunrise Wind, Empire Wind Farms 1 & 2, and Beacon Wind will create 4.3 gigawatts of energy—with more on the way—that will help power our lives without burning fossil fuels, all while creating the jobs of the future right here on Long Island. There are job training centers popping up across Long Island, like the National Offshore Wind Training Center in Brentwood. Supporting these projects is a win-win-win for the environment, the workforce, and the economy. NYLCV will help lead the way in the creation of 9 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2035, while increasing New York’s offshore wind goal to 20 gigawatts by 2050 by:

- Advocating for state selected offshore wind projects during permitting and construction processes.
- Amplifying all the benefits of these projects to surrounding communities.
- Supporting strong labor standards and utilization of registered apprenticeship programs whenever possible.

LOCAL ENERGY RESILIENCY

Superstorm Sandy and other major weather events have shown the impact that climate change can have on our energy grid. To help build resilience in our energy system and bring down the emissions of the system, NYLCV will:

- Ensure PSEG:
 - expands LIPA’s renewable energy and efficiency programs,
 - improves the storm resiliency of the transmission system, and
 - makes meaningful investments in necessary transmission upgrades.
- Support the soon-to-be-implemented opt-out Time-of-Use energy billing system that helps to reduce the burden on the energy grid during peak hours, while also reducing the use of energy and greenhouse gas emissions overall.

BUILDINGS

Our built environment is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in New York, and Long Island is no exception. While only about 4% of houses in the United States use home heating oil, about 40%

of houses use this dirty fossil fuel on Long Island. Constructing new clean buildings and converting existing ones to clean heating can dramatically improve our climate and air quality. NYLCV will:

- Encourage the creation of incentives for energy-efficiency upgrades in existing residential and commercial buildings.
- Advocate for the requirement of green building standards and zero-emission heating systems for new residential and commercial construction, like heat pumps for heating and cooling.

SOLAR

Solar energy is playing a large role in the energy transition across the Northeast and the country. Long Island should lead the way on this front. Unfortunately, some community architectural review boards can make the process of installing climate-saving solar projects grueling and ultimately not worth the effort, while some communities are even putting in solar moratoriums or front-facing restrictions on solar installations. NYLCV will:

- Advocate for the removal of barriers in local laws and codes to streamline the permit process

for installation of renewable energy sources for homeowners and business owners.

- Encourage architectural review boards to speed up the process for approval.
- Oppose moratoriums on solar construction and restrictions on its use.
- Support the requirement of the installation of solar panels on new commercial buildings and parking structures where feasible.

STORAGE

Siting, permitting, and constructing battery storage is the next phase in our energy transition on Long Island. This step is vital in making sure the light turns on when a switch is flipped. It is thus necessary to appropriately and equitably distribute these battery storage sites across the island to build the infrastructure of the future. NYLCV will:

- Support selected battery storage projects during the permitting process.
- Work with local partners to develop a standardized permitting process for battery storage.



Transportation

There is no scenario where the state hits its climate goals without significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. In recent years, while the purchase of electric vehicles across Long Island has significantly increased, one of the main barriers to purchasing an EV is range anxiety. To combat this issue and others, NYLCV will:

- Advocate for the passage of laws at the municipality and county levels to require 30% of new parking construction to be capable of supporting EV charging stations. This will help lower the future cost of charging stations, as the vast majority of the cost comes from the excavating portion of the construction.
- Push for electric vehicle charging stations in all municipal garages and parking lots.
- Campaign for the passage of laws requiring municipalities to purchase only electric vehicles by 2030.

Public transportation needs to be clean, reliable, easy to use, and accessible. To make using public transportation easier than driving, NYLCV will:

- Support integrated multimodal transportation like walking, bicycling, and public transportation. Improve interconnectivity between buses, trains, and planes.

- Encourage complete street networks that connect residential areas to commercial areas, parks, and green spaces.
- Work to achieve the completion of the Long Island Greenway.
- Help formulate a plan and find a funding source to electrify the Long Island Rail Road.



Water Quality

From Long Island's sole source aquifer to its estuary water, water on Long Island is precious. Long Island's reliance on a sole source aquifer makes it especially vulnerable to water quality issues. Much of Long Island, in particular Suffolk County, uses old and degrading septic and cesspool wastewater systems. These systems break frequently and pour dangerous pollution and nitrogen into both the aquifer and surrounding estuaries. Additionally, Brownfield sites and the Grumman Plume add to the worrying ecological picture. These combined issues have led to devastating environmental and ecological effects, like toxic blue-green algae blooms and fish kills in the local bays Long Islanders love to enjoy. To combat these water quality issues, NYLCV will:

- Advocate for the passage of policies that would: require homes that already have the option of connecting to sewer systems to do so; require

- testing and septic fixes during property transfer or system failure; and, increase funding and policies for the transition from septic systems to sewers with recharge and/or reclamation features.
- Promote the use of the Septic Improvement Program (SIP) by homeowners and support initiatives to expand SIP funding.
- Encourage the continued implementation of the Long Island Sound, Peconic, and South Shore Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMP) to restore and preserve the estuaries by incorporating CCMP recommendations into town and village codes.
- Push local municipalities to implement eelgrass natural buffers along the coast, including restored wetlands, oyster reefs, dunes, and other living shoreline approaches, while also opposing the hardening of shorelines.



Waste Management

With the impending closure of the Brookhaven landfill in 2024, Long Island's waste management system is in need of revamping. To mitigate this issue and help put the island on a more sustainable path when it comes to waste management, NYLCV will:

- Advocate for budget allocations and policies from municipalities and county legislatures to expand

- regional recycling facilities, anaerobic digesters, compost sites, curbside collection of residential food waste and commercial organic waste recycling programs, and "save-as-you-throw" programs.
- Provide educational materials for backyard composting and other local organic recycling efforts, and link local composting with local agriculture.
- Support county or regional level solid waste management plans.



Open Space





Long Island has many great community parks and environmental gems like the Pine Barrens, but open space has become harder to find, create, and protect with the extensive development on the island. It's important that we protect the open spaces we do have, and expand where we can for future generations to enjoy. In that pursuit NYLCV will:

- Advocate to make Plum Island a National Monument.
- Support expansion opportunities of the Pine Barrens in an organized and sustainable fashion.
- Promote investment and protect parks and green spaces like pocket parks and community gardens, with special attention to underserved communities in greatest need of parkland development.



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NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

NYLCV is the only nonpartisan, statewide environmental organization in New York that fights for clean water, clean air, renewable energy, and open space through political action.

NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND

NYLCVEF educates, engages and empowers New Yorkers to be effective advocates for the environment.

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