



**Statement of Adriana Espinoza
New York City Program Director
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Hearing of the Committee on Parks
October 25th, 2018**

Good afternoon. My name is Adriana Espinoza, and I'm the Director of the New York City Program at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV represents over 30,000 members in New York City and we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our economy healthier and more resilient. I would like to thank Chair Grodenchik for the opportunity to testify before the Committee on Parks and Recreation.

New York City has over 77,701 acres of green space making it approximately 41% green. Nearly 10% of this green space, or 7,300 acres, are under the jurisdiction of NYC Parks. There are over 5 million trees made up of hundreds of species in our natural forests. NYC's forests--one of our city's most valuable environmental assets--provide enormous public benefits. They mitigate climate change, provide clean air, and contribute to the well-being of residents. To illustrate:

- Tree cover can cool down a city by 2 to 8 degrees Celsius.
- When planted near buildings, trees can cut air conditioning use by 30%, and reduce heating energy use by a further 20-50%.
- A single mature tree can absorb 331 pounds of carbon dioxide a year and filter some of the harmful airborne pollutants. On the whole, NYC's trees remove 1,300 tons of pollutants from the atmosphere each year.

Trees are also very valuable to our city's economy. New York City Department of Parks and Recreation measured the economic impact of its trees to be \$120 million a year. Each year, NYC's canopy captures 1.97 billion gallons of stormwater runoff and stores 1.2 million tons of carbon per year.

However, NYC's natural forests are at a critical juncture. Without concerted efforts across the board, it can be challenging to preserve and protect our urban forestry. Between 1984 and 2002 alone, New York City lost 9,000 acres of green open space to competing land uses. Our forests are also under threat as a result of lack of proper maintenance, illegal dumping and invasive species. Investment is needed *now* to ensure we do not find our forests in a crisis. Pushing this investment down the road only guarantees that the work will cost exponentially more and create a generations-long backlog of work. Just like other critical city infrastructure, it's imperative that our forests are kept in a state of good repair. To achieve this, the City should invest \$385 million over 25 years for the ongoing restoration, conservation, and management of our forests.



**Statement of Adriana Espinoza
New York City Program Director
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Hearing of the Committee on Parks
October 25th, 2018**

In New York City, the Natural Areas Conservancy is on the forefront of researching our urban forest. This April, NAC and NYC Parks released their Forest Management Framework for NYC--a 25 year roadmap and funding plan for the management of our city's forests. It is the first-ever comprehensive plan for this critical natural resource, and is the result of years of data-driven and science-based research.

NYLCV strongly supports the NAC's efforts to restore and preserve our forests, and urge the City to implement the Forest Management Framework for NYC. We also believe this framework should be adopted as part of the City's OneNYC plan, as it's benefits contribute to the plans existing goals of sustainability, resiliency, and equity. Implementation of the Forest Management Framework is a top priority to NYLCV, and will continue to be a major focus of our advocacy in the coming years.

I'd like to thank Chair Grodenchik and the Committee on Parks and Recreation for their attention to this issue, and look forward to working with you all closely to move ensure NYC has a healthy, thriving forest for generations to come.