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2019 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire for New York City Public Advocate Candidates

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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.

With the current Administration rolling back regulations at an alarming rate, the onus is on cities like NYC to make sure we're living up to, and leading the way on, the environment. Having served two Democratic White House Administrations that had pro-environmental agendas, I believe we need to be living up to all of the policies put in place by the Obama Administration and in agreement with the Paris Accord as well as looking at ideas proposed in the New Green Deal. I also believe we could use the Fund for Public Advocacy, using New York City as a test case to innovate new ideas for environmental protections that could be rolled out to other willing participants across the nation.

My two decades of experience across government, politics, law and philanthropy make me well positioned to hold leaders accountable for promises they make in regard to the environment and actually implementing programs for New Yorkers to take advantage of. I am the most qualified candidate with the experience, the know-

how, and the will to break through the bureaucracy to get real results. I've spent my career as an advocate, carrying out the belief that no problem is too big to solve, and no amount of bureaucracy or infighting will stop me from getting a job done. I have a track record of breaking through the bureaucracy, bringing to this race over two decades of experience across politics, government, philanthropy and law. I've served in two Democratic White House Administrations and under President Obama I was part of the team at the Department of Health and Human Services that provided healthcare to millions of Americans. As an attorney, I've represented immigrant workers seeking fair pay, won clemency from President Obama for a man that had served over a decade for a non-violent drug crime, and successfully got an injunction to prevent voter suppression by candidate Donald Trump and his associates prior to the 2016 election. I was also instrumental in passing the Mental Health Parity Act, which requires that all health insurers provide mental health benefits (including addiction) at the same level that they provide medical surgical benefits.

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 2018 NYC Policy Agenda](#) when formulating your responses.)

2. Energy and Infrastructure

We must incentivize sustainable energy options, including green roofs to aid urban cooling, increased use of solar energy, and wastewater geothermal energy. As Public Advocate I would monitor programs in place to ensure that New Yorkers have access to renewable energy and that the city is working towards increased use of renewable energy.

3. Resilience

My brother was displaced by Hurricane Sandy, so I know personally that it's only a matter of



time until NYC is hit with another super storm. The threat of rising seawater levels cannot be ignored. The city and the region must take a proactive approach to building resiliency into all planning decisions. This includes considering resiliency when planning developments in at-risk areas, building natural barriers along coastal areas, and developing protections for critical infrastructure.

4. Solid Waste

Single-use plastics are one of the most dangerous and toxic items impacting our environment. Not only do they enter our water system and break down into microplastics that then pollute our food systems and our bodies, they also lead to the most visible litter around our city. I support a ban on single-use plastic bags in New York City as an important first step as well as the bottle bill expansion. The City should also move away from pollution-generating sanitation garages and toward single-stream, zero waste recycling and should implement a hassle-free and comprehensive city-wide composting program.

5. Clean Air

Big buildings are among the cities largest polluters. I support the legislation proposed to decrease emissions from big buildings, and believe if NYC adopts these changes other cities will follow.

Another surefire way to handle clean air is to make sure we have a functioning public transit system. Idling cars and trucks or vehicles stuck in congestion are also major polluters, which is just one reason why I support congestion pricing. I also support proactive efforts to incentivize off-peak residential deliveries and transitioning all city vehicles to electric vehicles.

The City should also address air quality and noise concerns by working with power plant operators to find appropriate times to release steam.

6. Clean Water

The fact that there is lead, and other toxins, in the water in NYCHA buildings and public schools is unacceptable. As a mother, I find it criminal that NYC faces levels on par with Flint – the developmental effects on children will impact a generation. The city must work to aggressively remediate these issues. The Public Advocate must ensure proper testing is in place to track progress.

7. Sustainable Food Systems

Food insecurity is a major problem for many New Yorkers. Additionally, food deserts cause health problems for New Yorkers who don't have access to fresh food. I support expanding SNAP and other food access programs, and Health Bucks at farmers markets. I support urban gardens in public schools and on rooftops, using Gotham Greens as a model for how to expand.

8. Mobility

According to the Regional Plan Association, less than two-thirds of New Yorkers live within walking distance of a subway stop. New Yorkers living in these transit deserts rely on buses to get where they need to go. The city should stop eliminating bus lines with low ridership, which only makes the system slower and more unreliable for people who depend on that mode of transportation. Getting more people to ride the bus will make the system better and provide a needed alternative to subway lines that will have to be closed for much needed fixes to modernize the infrastructure.

To enable buses to move more quickly through the city, we should prioritize dedicated bus lanes (with enforcement!), transit priority signaling, all door boarding, and redesigned bus routes. To increase the reliability of Access-A-Ride, vehicles should be able to use the dedicated bus lanes.

9. Parks, Waterfronts and Natural Areas

Green space is incredibly important to the quality of life of residents and a sustainable ecosystem, so we must balance the need to build more affordable housing with the preservation of public green space. Low-income communities often have less green space than higher income communities; this inequity should be remedied with an investment in green space in areas that are lacking it. I support planting more trees and taking care of the ones we have, including the implementation of systems of preventative care for urban trees.

