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2021 Environmental Questionnaire for Westchester Candidates

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the New York League of Conservation Voters Questionnaire.

To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please consult [NYLCV's 2021 Westchester Policy Agenda](#) when answering the questions.

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 the 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.

Here are a few guidelines:

- Questionnaires are due **Friday, May 14, 2021**
- The completed questionnaire is mandatory for endorsement consideration and must be submitted via e-mail as a Microsoft Word file to: politics@nylcv.org
- Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg (jklainberg@nylcv.org)
- After receipt of the completed questionnaire, candidates will be invited to participate in a formal interview with a local Chapter Board.
- General election endorsements will be made by the NYLCV State Board on July 29, 2021.

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Candidate name: Catherine F. Parker

Office sought (& district number if applicable): Westchester Legislator, District 7

Campaign e-mail: electcatherineparker@gmail.com

Campaign phone: 914-433-3312

Website: ElectCatherineParker.com

Facebook page: Friends of Catherine Parker / also Catherine Parker

Twitter handle: @cparkerryeny and @legcathparker

Campaign manager's name and email: N/A

Press Secretary's name and email: N/A

Scheduler's name and email: N/A

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.

I am currently in my 14th year as an elected official, and have been committed from the very beginning to making environmental policy my legacy. On the list of policies that I have accomplished as a legislator are:

- 1. The elimination of 4 and 6 heating oil**
- 2. Creation of the position of Energy Director and Office of Sustainability for Westchester**
- 3. Creation of a new bike/walk pathway from the Rye train station to Playland**
- 4. A Resolution opposing a 24/7 Danskammer Gas Plant**

These are just some of highlights.



During the course of the last year, I have worked with colleagues in the state legislature to encourage the Public Service Commission to put into motion policies in keeping with the CLCPA. I have also earned a certificate through Pace Law School as a participant in their LULA program (Land Use Leadership Alliance), and most recently supported the law center's application to the Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative to reactivate the Long Island Sound Intermunicipal Council. Lastly, I am currently taking a course at Fordham Business School on Sustainable Business Strategy which addresses environmental issues as well as other issues related to sustainability.

ISSUES

Each year, NYLCV works closely with New York's leading environmental, public health, conservation, energy, environmental justice, and transportation organizations to identify the most pressing priorities on fighting climate change, conserving land and water, and protecting public health. These issues drive NYLCV's advocacy work throughout the legislative session, influence the bills we select for NYLCV's Environmental Scorecards, and informs the decision on the candidates we choose to endorse. To ensure your responses are in alignment with the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV's 2021 Westchester Policy Agenda](#) when formulating your responses.

Please indicate your level of commitment to, and if applicable your recent personal and professional activity concerning, all the policy priorities of our partners per the following issues:

Combating Climate Change

The time to act on climate is now. We must make radical changes in short order to avoid catastrophic climate change. New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act will require action at all levels of government to achieve its ambitious goal of reducing economy wide emissions 85% by 2050 and achieving 70% renewable energy by 2030. By allocating resources wisely, local governments can

have a significant impact on energy use and the environment. Localities must also adapt to a changing climate and include resiliency planning in all aspects of future governance.

2. Energy (p. 5)

As Chair of Westchester Board of Legislators Planning, Economic Development, and Energy Committee I have had the opportunity to present to the public that the time for a doubling down of efforts for renewable energy is now. As mentioned previously, we communicated to Federal and State agencies and officials our opposition to more fossil fuel infrastructure (Danskammer). In addition, I have been meeting with County officials to encourage Passive House or zero emissions construction of new projects such as affordable housing in Westchester.

3. Transportation (p.5)

I have been driving a Chevy Volt since 2015, so I don't just talk the talk! The county administration in conjunction with support from the entire legislature has taking aggressive action to electrify our fleet and infrastructure.

As mentioned earlier, a project in my district that I have grown old with, but that will be completed this June is the Playland Pathway – a link from the Rye Train Station to Playland to encourage walking and biking. So far, the portion that is completed sees lots of locals walking, running, and biking. With Playland reopening this summer, it will be a big hit!

4. Resiliency (p. 6)

Living in a community where almost 80% is in a flood zone, and when once upon a time I had 5 ft then 7 ft of water in the basement of my business within six weeks from two 100 year storms, I have been very focused on resiliency. As mentioned previously, I am working with Pace Law School to reinstitute LISWIC, and have had meetings with the county administration to reengage municipalities on flood projects. Just this past April, I initiated the addition of the Army Corps of Engineers project for the Mamaroneck and Sheldrake Rivers to Westchester County's Federal Package (a short list of top priority requests to our Federal delegation).

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

I have long been a composter, and try to recycle and free cycle everything. As part of a team of three (one Rye official, one County official, one community volunteer) we initiated Zero Waste Day at Playland for the last three years as part of the County's Household Recycling Day. We partner with organizations such as Furniture Sharehouse, The Sharing Shelf, Linking Handlebars, Mt. Vernon Animal Shelter, to name a few. It has been extremely successful.

Food waste has long interested me as part of the problem that adds to climate change. I served on the county's Food Waste Task Force, and I am pleased that Westchester has created a new shared service for municipalities to start their own food waste programs.

Protecting People and Natural Resources

All New Yorkers deserve indoor and outdoor environments that are free of contamination and pollution.

6. Clean Land, Air, and Water (p. 9)

Agreed. Back in 2015, I had my colleagues at the BOL initiate a countywide Healthy Yards Pledge project with the support of Dr. Diane Lewis, and in the following years I have continued to support pesticide and fertilizer free yards. Air – as previously mentioned 4&6, but part of my opposition to gas powered plants is also the environmental justice regarding where those plants are sited. Water – I have supported so many county projects to clean our waters. When we can get a sewer authority to take the lateral lines from municipalities, I will be delighted. Stay tuned!

7. Sustainable Development (p. 10)

If you watch the video from my April 8th, 2021 committee meeting we went on the road to Chappaqua to tour an affordable housing project being built to passive house standards. As mentioned previously, I would like to see the county do more to incentivize this kind of development.

8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.10 – 11)

If there was one silver lining out of this pandemic it would have to be that Westchester County residents discovered more of our county parks. I serve on the county's Parks, Conservation, and Recreation Board and I have a deep commitment to our parks and open spaces. During my tenure on the board, we have heavily invested in keeping our parks in top shape – North/South County Trailway, Playland, Saxon Woods, Blue Mountain Preserve, are just some of the parks that have seen significant capital investment.

9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

Westchester is fortunate to have an Agricultural Board, and during my time chairing the county's Environment Committee we added several new farms. Local food and community gardens are important to promote in our battle against climate change. Recently, I have been in discussion with the chef from the documentary "Blind Sushi" to do a program here in Westchester to teach us about sustainable food. Imagine a miso soup made from local "weeds" or a salad of invasive species. It's also going to be a program along in the Sound Shore so attendees can hear about how Rye's Milton Point went from being "Clamtown" to it being illegal to eat the shellfish from the western part of Long Island Sound.