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2021 Environmental Questionnaire for Long Island 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 Long Island 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, April 30, 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: Debra S. Mulé

Office sought (& district number if applicable): Nassau County Legislature (LD5)

Campaign e-mail: debraforLD5@gmail.com

Campaign phone: 516-304-0341

Website: N/A

Facebook page: <http://facebook.com/debraforLD5>

Twitter handle: N/A

Campaign manager's name and email: Jonathan Prevost; Jonathand.Prevost@gmail.com

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.

Environmental initiatives have been central to my agenda throughout my tenure in the Nassau County Legislature. I was recently named to the bi-county Recycling Regional Task Force, an entity that focuses on devising and promoting waste reduction strategies.

Prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, I took steps toward establishing a district-wide compost program; I have resumed efforts to launch this initiative and will do so when public health conditions dictate it is feasible to do so. Furthermore, I continue to host community cleanups at local parks; am working to establish apiaries to restore the honeybee population, and exploring the feasibility of community farming on portions of the Brookside Preserve. In addition, we are exploring how to incorporate livestock, such as goats, into our efforts to control the spread of invasive plants at the Preserve.

Previously, I sponsored legislation that would require merchants to charge a 5-cent fee for each paper or plastic bag provided to customers. After the State of New York enacted a plastic bag ban, I advocated for the County to opt in to the 5-cent fee on paper bags. Despite knowing that the Presiding Officer would not allow this to go forward and we were not successful on the local level, I am confident that my local efforts were instrumental in creating an atmosphere that was conducive for statewide action.

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 Long Island 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)

I am a strong supporter of research and development initiatives that will wean our communities off of the use of fossil fuels. In my capacity as a Nassau County Legislator, I support and advocate for efforts to integrate alternative energy sources, such as wind and solar power, at our County facilities.

3. Transportation (p. 6)

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Nassau County has endeavored to preserve the sustainability of its NICE bus system, which has experienced a sharp decline in ridership amidst the pandemic. In addition, to promote greater traffic safety and walkability, I have also shepherded throughout the County approval process a nearly \$8 million “Complete Streets”

infrastructure project covering approximately 3 miles of Grand Avenue in Baldwin. Contracts for the work have been signed and the project is expected to begin this summer.

4. Resiliency (p. 6 - 7)

I have been a vocal support of the Bay Park Conveyance Project and am delighted that work began on Earth Day. By redirecting treated effluent, nitrogen levels will be greatly reduced in Reynolds Channel and the Western Bays. This will force the salt marshes in those bodies of water to establish much deeper roots to discover the nitrogen needed to thrive. Creating this type of setting allows salt marshes to establish flourish, thereby creating a natural flood mitigation aid and barrier.

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

As a member of the bi-County Recycling Regional Task Force, I am an active participant in regional efforts to devise environmentally sound regional waste reduction strategies.

I believe that my efforts to reduce the use of disposable paper and plastic bags through the legislative process raised important awareness that will lead to the use of more sustainable options, thereby protecting aquatic life from injury. I also co-sponsored bipartisan legislation that bans the use of most Styrofoam products in our County. Finally, as I mentioned previously, I took steps toward establishing a district-wide compost program; I have resumed efforts to launch this initiative and will do so when public health conditions dictate it is safe to do so.

Protecting People and Natural Resources

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

6. Clean Water (p. 8 - 9)

While the Bay Park Wastewater Treatment Facility has undergone extensive renovations following Superstorm Sandy, it still discharges effluent into Reynolds Channel, which has rendered the body of water unsuitable for aquatic life, swimming and almost all forms of recreational use. To correct this issue, the Bay Park Conveyance Project, which broke ground on Earth Day, will redirect treated effluent to Nassau's Cedar Creek plant and then several miles out into the Atlantic Ocean, where it will be more effectively diffused. This transformational project will greatly decrease the amount of nitrogen in Reynolds Channel and the Western Bays, which

will restore the health of aquatic ecosystems in these areas and facilitate the revitalization of salt marshes, shellfish populations and more.

7. Sustainable Development (p. 9)

I am working closely with my partners in the Town of Hempstead on the Baldwin downtown revitalization plans. This will include a transit-oriented development component, as this important business district is adjacent to ample train and bus service. To assist at the County level, I have successfully shepherded through the legislative approval process a nearly \$8 million “Complete Streets” infrastructure project covering approximately 3 miles of Grand Avenue. These upgrades are designed to improve automobile traffic flow and enhance pedestrian safety. By making downtown Baldwin more walkable, we are not only setting the stage for successful mixed-use economic development, we are reducing the need for cars and promoting more sustainable lifestyles.

8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.11)

I have been spearheading efforts to rehabilitate the currently blighted Oakwood Beach Club property in Baldwin and transform it for use as passive parkland. We have been in touch with the Trust for Public Land, which is thrilled by the potential of preserving a scarce tract of coastal land in Nassau County. Due to unresolved tax liens and environmental conditions, however, we are in just the beginning stages of what will almost certainly be a complex and lengthy process.

Previously, I secured an amendment to recent County legislation that protects environmentally sensitive lands (such as County land in Baldwin Harbor) from inappropriate public access and use. Through my district office, I regularly host community cleanups, and I am hopeful that my plastic- and paper-bag advocacy raises awareness of sustainable alternatives and reduces the amount of litter marring our public lands.

9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

Because bees serve such an indispensable role in agriculture, reports of their dwindling population represent an environmental emergency that jeopardizes our food security. As part of our efforts to stabilize the population, I am in the process of seeking to establish apiaries in my district. My office is also taking steps toward promoting sustainable gardening and

waste management through the creation of a district-wide composting initiative, and transforming a portion of the Brookside Preserve for use as part of a community agriculture initiative in conjunction with the Peconic Land Trust.

I am proud to work with a local non-profit as a sponsor of its spring and summertime farmer's markets that not only provide access to healthy, locally-farmed produce, the program provides opportunities for local high school students to gain first-hand entrepreneurial experience through their participation.