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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: Elaine Phillips

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

Campaign e-mail: Phillips4comptroller

Campaign phone: 516 412-1833

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Scheduler's name and email: Liz Liguori Liguori.elizabeth@gmail.com

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.

My personal and professional commitment to the environment has been strong, and I am eager to build upon my solid record of accomplishments directed toward cleaner water, air and land.

During my tenure as a village mayor, I moved to install storm drain filters to curtail non-point source pollution. In addition, I commissioned a study focused on protecting groundwater from chemical and saltwater intrusion.

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, I initiated a tree planting program, which has continued to mitigate stormwater runoff and erosion.

As a New York State Senator, I worked to deliver legislation that provided \$12 million in grant funding to upgrade Long Island's oldest wastewater treatment



facility, which helped to reduce the amount of untreated sanitary sewage that enters our waterways. The upgrades also made the facility more energy efficient.

What's more, I supported New York's Clean Water Bond Act. It provided a massive investment in water purity, improving wastewater treatment and overhauling the water treatment infrastructure. The legislation also created a comprehensive plan to identify and establish standards for pollutants like 1, 4-dioxane and PFOA. My legislation also protected Long Island's drinking water from adverse impacts that could possibly result from the reopening of New York City's Jamaica wells. I was pleased to support record Environmental Protection Fund monies for open space protection funding.

As Nassau County Comptroller, I am eager to expand the office's work to include performance audits that relate to environmental protection. Ensuring that taxpayer monies are being used optimally to treat and protect drinking water, and monitoring sewage treatment compliance are areas that I would like to pursue.

I am honored to have earned and received the NYLCV's endorsement in both of my NY Senate races

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 fully committed to addressing climate change, forcefully pushing Nassau County to decrease its carbon footprint and increase its use of renewable energy. Nassau County should commit to eliminating its fossil fuel vehicles by a specific date. Hempstead Town has done so and is already testing electric powered garbage trucks. Retrofitting buildings, increasing the use of photovoltaic energy, wind power, geo-thermal and tidal energy should be high on the priority list. Again, I would like to use the Office of the Comptroller to implement performance audits, ensuring that the County meets benchmark goals. During my tenure in Albany, I supported NYSERDA programs that provided funding for home energy efficiency upgrades to low-income homeowners.

3. Transportation (p. 6)

The Nassau County Executive should pursue a major bond initiative to upgrade the County's bus system and to employ cleaner and more efficient technology. Further, a major publicity

campaign should be undertaken to increase the use of public transportation. I am excited about the establishment of a new commuter train station at the Belmont Racetrack property. I believe that Nassau County needs to pursue motor vehicle charging stations with preferred parking at its facilities to encourage the use of electric vehicles. Finally, I believe that Nassau County needs to utilize federal CDBG funding and other grant monies to create walkable communities that coordinate with public transportation.

4. Resiliency (p. 6 - 7)

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, we all became painfully aware of the need to enhance the resiliency of our coastal communities and harden the coastline to protect against tidal surges and stormwater flooding. I think that we need to build upon the state-funded efforts that were part of the Long Beach Island Project for Coastal Hardening and Storm Resiliency. In specific, we need to ensure development that is sustainable and that does not compromise our coastal resilience. Further, the need to expand open space initiatives is critical to the resiliency of our sole source aquifer and the reduction of storm water runoff and non-point source pollution.

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

The manner in which we treat solid waste has broad and serious consequences for our families and future generations. Some of our municipalities are doing a good job dealing with solid waste by promoting and hosting hazardous waste disposal programs, e-cycling events and robust recycling efforts. However, we have to do much more to ensure that dangerous chemicals and pollutants do not enter the waste stream. What's more, the need to reduce the amount of waste that we generate by encouraging recycling, reuse and conservation is apparent. Education programs in the schools and more initiatives that target commercial polluters are areas that demand attention and action.

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)

The necessity of clean and pure drinking water, as well as healthy local bays and waterways, is clear. Our local governments are facing major challenges in keeping drinking water pure.

Unsustainable development could threaten our sole-source aquifer with salt intrusion and other undesirable consequences. Controlling pollution and cleaning up brownfields sites is also urgently needed to prevent the pollution of local drinking water wells. Residents from numerous communities that surround the former Grumman / U.S. Navy property in Bethpage are still dealing with the serious impacts of decades of chemical dumping that has contaminated the groundwater.

With respect to the health of our bays and waterways, the need to continue and expand efforts to reduce non-point source pollution is a top priority. As mentioned in a previous question, I worked diligently to have storm drain filters installed in village storm drains to prevent pollution of local waterways. In addition, I am a supporter of initiatives to upgrade our treatment of sanitary sewage and curtail the discharging of treated effluent into bays and waterways. Clearly, ocean discharge of properly treated sanitary sewage is the preferred option.

As noted in a previous answer, I was proud to have supported New York's Clean Water Bond Act, which has helped to ensure pure drinking water and has enhanced the treatment of wastewater.

7. Sustainable Development (p. 9)

Sustainable development is a challenge for our suburban communities on Long Island for a host of reasons. Whereas some areas, such as New York City, rely on surface water sources for drinking, our region relies on a sensitive and delicate groundwater source.

Overdevelopment threatens to tax our groundwater resource, raising the specter of salt intrusion. What's more, open space to serve as a natural filter for rainwater should be an important priority. The demands of development on our sanitary sewage system must be considered seriously. Increased nitrogen levels and the die-off of marine life are clear signs that more needs to be done to protect our planet from bay discharge of stormwater. When looking at sustainable development, we need to ensure that buildings are efficient, incorporate renewable energy technology and reduce carbon emissions. Additionally, looking at the types of development, we should also consider the desirability of zoning that encourages efficiency and promotes the use of mass transportation. I think that the Town of Hempstead has done an impressive job with its commitment to transit-oriented development.

8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.11)

A determined approach to preserving open space and improving our parks in a way that is in harmony with our environment has my total and focused attention. I am supportive of unique approaches to open space that combine education, demonstration and research. Indeed, I have been impressed with Hempstead Town's landfill-turned-nature-preserve in Merrick. The Levy Park and Preserve has been a showcase of ecological sensitivity, featuring a restored Meadow Brook and revitalized wetlands. I am also an advocate of government acquisition of open space, including tidal wetlands and uplands, which are important natural habitats, and they are vital to the ecological health of our waterways. In the State Senate, I worked to secure funding for open space acquisition, as well as for improvements to the State Parks System.

9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

It is sad that local farms have all but disappeared in Nassau County. I am an advocate of preserving Nassau's remaining farms and exploring ways to expand agricultural opportunities for young people in our County. Utilizing areas in municipal parks and disused storm basins for agricultural programs is an option that I would like to pursue in Nassau County government. I would also like to expand local farmers' markets that support our agricultural industry on Long Island and promote the farm-to-table movement in our suburban region.