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**2021 Environmental Questionnaire  
for New York City 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 New York City 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, February 26, 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](mailto:politics@nylcv.org)
- Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg

([jklainberg@nylcv.org](mailto:jklainberg@nylcv.org))

After receipt of the completed questionnaire, candidates will be invited to participate in a formal interview with a local Chapter Board.

Candidate endorsements will be made by the NYLCV State Board on April 29, 2021.

### **Campaign Contact Information**

Candidate name: Eric Adams

Office sought & district number: Mayor of the City of New York

Campaign e-mail: [info@ericadams2021.com](mailto:info@ericadams2021.com)

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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.

Almost no other city got as loud a climate wake-up call as we got when Hurricane Sandy

landed on us. And what did we do with that wake-up call? We hit the snooze button. After New York led on climate change issues under Mayor Bloomberg, the last eight years have largely been wasted--and now we are in serious trouble. Inefficiency leads to inequality.

To catch up, now we need massive investments in our infrastructure -- from our shoreline to our energy grid -- as well as investments in programs that get us on track to a carbon-neutral future. I strongly believe that those investments can also be a source of jobs and a major part of our economic recovery during this recession. We also need to stop building pipelines for fossil fuels and start building a pipeline of new young thinkers.

For me, this is not professional or political--it's personal.

In 2016, I transitioned to eating a plant-based diet due to health concerns. Since then, I have learned about the environmental impacts of food and have successfully advocated for plant-forward food policies for both public health and environmental reasons, such as Meatless Mondays in all NYC public schools. I have also authored several op-eds on the relationship between the food system and sustainability. My passion for a plant-forward food system is indicative of my personal and professional commitments to a pro-environmental agenda.

## 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 New York City 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:

### Top Priorities

Transportation isn't only the number one source of greenhouse gas emissions in our state—it is also a major source of air pollution, causing respiratory and other public health issues. This is

particularly the case near New York City's many major highways where too often, these communities are low-income and communities of color.

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p. 3)

We need the federal government to rapidly approve congestion pricing not only for the important revenue it will generate but for the clear climate change and environmental justice benefits. Congestion pricing will not only improve transportation options in transit deserts which are predominantly Black and Brown communities it is anticipated to greatly reduce traffic through communities of color like along the BQE which runs through several NYCHA facilities and low income communities, which are disproportionately impacted by respiratory illnesses like asthma.

At the same time, New York City must be more aggressive in remaking our transportation future where we have the most control: our streets. This means doubling down on Open Streets programming, pedestrianizing parts of our city, and doing more to equitably build out our protected bicycle and safe walking infrastructure. Black and Brown communities have historically been overlooked by DOT when expanding this infrastructure despite the fact that a majority of fatalities and serious injuries occur in these very same communities. This is why I will allocate capital funding to support Citi Bike expansion so it reaches every corner of New York City and empower communities to work with DOT to build out the protected cycling infrastructure that every community deserves and to which they are entitled.

We must also remake our City's transit infrastructure by adding new busways like the one on 14th Street and building out a state-of-the-art Bus Rapid Transit system that will be the envy of the world. We can start by remaking roads like Linden Boulevard and Kings Highway to address transit deserts and speed up commutes.

Finally, while we need to work with the MTA to advance projects like a Utica Avenue transit extension and the TriBoro Rx, and the extension of the Second Avenue Subway, we must also capture the lower hanging fruit that takes advantage of existing assets in our system while improving mobility for residents. This means building off my successful advocacy to secure out-of-station free transfers for riders at the Livonia Avenue L and the Junius Street 3 stations by working with the MTA to implement free transfers at disconnected stations within ½ mile of one another. And we should expand the Freedom Ticket to all intra-city LIRR and MNR stations in New York City. My advocacy for the

highly successful Atlantic Ticket is integral to save low income communities time and money by speeding up their commutes and utilizing excess capacity on existing trains.

More than ever, New Yorkers realized the value of our parks and open spaces in 2020 as our cultural institutions were closed and we had to practice social distancing. Open green space is one of the City's most valuable environmental assets but also contributes to the well-being of our residents and our economy.

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Our parks are the great equalizers in our City, and do so much to capture stormwater runoff and reduce the urban heat island effect. During my tenure as borough president, I allocated nearly \$40 million of capital funding to open space investment in Brooklyn alone. However, more must be done to secure funding for our parks and I have committed to allocating a Percent for Parks to increase the budget for the Parks Department as well as expanding partnerships with conservancies like the Trust for Public Land to advance capital projects in our parks. At a time when we are facing billion dollar deficits, we must be innovative and creative to cut costs but also execute work faster and cheaper than the City.

Not only did I fund the renovations of scores of parks and playgrounds, but I also began initial investment in new parks like the BQGreen proposal which would recapture lost land over the BQE in Los Sures, Williamsburg, and remake it into open space. I also conducted a study with NYU Wagner Capstone students to investigate how to reconnect the Windsor Terrace community that had been bifurcated by the Prospect Expressway. PX Forward identified ways to recapture land for open space and if elected mayor, I will analyze all communities that have been impacted by these Robert Moses-era highway projects.

Finally, while I will build out neighborhood parks and prioritize open streets in communities that do not have adequate open space, for those that are further afield from destination parks, I will create a "Safe Routes to Parks" to ensure that families can connect safely by bicycle to these important open spaces.

Reaching the City’s Zero Waste goal by 2030 will require work from all New Yorkers—cooperation of city officials and private industry, and buy-in from the public. Stimulating behavioral change is critical to meeting this goal, as is ensuring the City has programs in place that promote waste reduction, diversion, and sustainable waste management.

4. (p. 3)

The City cut its organics collection program as part of its deficit reduction measures for the current fiscal year. That was a mistake. The methane released from organic waste in landfills is destroying our environment and speeding climate change. And the cost of sending that waste to states far away increases in cost every year. To offset the cost of the collection program now while we face a budget crunch, we will guarantee private processors long-term contracts in exchange for picking up the cost of picking up the waste now.

New York City must also embrace the concept of a circular economy where we can reuse “waste” material for new purposes. New York City is doing this to a small degree with sand excavated from development projects that is reused for parks and making concrete. We must make this ubiquitous across New York City agencies. This not only moves us toward Zero Waste, but it can save New York City taxpayers significant money.

### Combating Climate Change

The time to act on climate is now. The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report makes it clear that we must make radical changes in short order to avoid catastrophic climate change. We will work to advance policies that decrease emissions from all sectors, prepare us to meet the unavoidable impacts of climate change, reduce waste, and foster a strong green economy. We must also ensure the changes we make to tackle climate change benefit disadvantaged communities and provide for a just transition.

5. Energy and Infrastructure (p. 5)

Combating climate change is the crisis of our lifetime and we must do everything possible at the local level to ensure that we meet the City's goal of implementing 100% clean, affordable energy and achieving carbon neutrality.

The first action I took when I assumed the borough presidency was to launch a Renewable and Sustainable Energy Task Force (ReSET) which brought together industry, advocates, and utilities to move our city's energy future to 100 percent clean energy.

We can make New York City the wind power hub of the eastern seaboard. With waterfront assets like SBMT, the Red Hook Container Terminal, Port Richmond, the Brooklyn Navy

Yard, we can corner the market on wind power manufacturing and other green technologies and prioritize these jobs to uplift those stuck in the cycle of poverty.

It is also important to also train our youth to earn incomes that pull them out of poverty, and that training emphasis must be in the clean energy sector. During my time at Brooklyn Borough Hall, I secured a workforce development grant from NYSERDA to train individuals to become Heat and Cooling Pump technicians as well as hosted numerous free trainings to provide skill development in Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) jobs.

As mayor, I would create a career technical education (CTE) school dedicated solely to training our young people in the green energy technologies of the future.

New York City must also lead by example.

The City has placed a number of regulations on industries to meet necessary climate goals. But the City remains behind on achieving its goals for itself, particularly goals related to renewable energy use and emissions. Climate change requires the transformation of multiple sectors, including energy, transportation and food—and these sectors will be tracked under my administration and included in further measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

But we will also invest significantly in leading by example as a City government, generating our own green energy at wastewater treatment plants and placing solar panels on City buildings. And we will invest in our ability to store energy and use it more efficiently retrofitting City buildings to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That means investing in wind power like we are doing at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, building more battery storage facilities to store energy to wean New York City off “Peaker Plants”, and support for community solar efforts to bring clean energy to communities that may not have high home ownership rates but also deserve clean and affordable energy. We can do this by targeting rail and bus yards and the acres of rooftop in our City to build out solar array fields.



We must reimagine our street designs if we are going to address the challenge of climate change, revitalize our economy, and improve New York City's quality of life. This means redesigning our streets in every part of New York City safe to cycle and walk without fear of losing your life to reckless drivers, creating a state of the art BRT system modeled on the Bus Action Plan, allocating capital funds to expand Citi Bike and create a citywide network of shared electric bikes and scooters that prioritizes those New Yorkers disconnected from transit.

In addition to building out protected bike lanes throughout the city, we will also find unused space such as road space under elevated highways and railways that can become bicycle superhighways.

#### 7. Resiliency (p. 6)

Our most vulnerable communities are often those that are not only economically vulnerable but climate vulnerable as well. In fact, one out of 10 public housing developments are located in flood plains.

To combat this vulnerability, I would invest in green infrastructure through the City's capital program to upgrade our electrical grid and transition our power source to wind and away from natural gas and to shore up our public housing stock.

These investments would be targeted in our most vulnerable communities, much like I championed the transitioning of electric MTA buses to prioritize areas like East New York and Brownsville.

#### 8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

When I was told my office could not participate in the City's organics collection programming, I partnered with the local farmers market to set up our own internal organics collection. By the time our office began working remotely, we had collected hundreds of pounds of compost that was diverted from local landfills. This must be the norm. New York City must enact organics collection in all its agencies to start and develop Zero Waste Guidelines for all buildings to advance this conversation. We have a chance to dramatically alter our commercial waste pickup through the implementation of Commercial Waste Zone

program efforts and organics collection must be included in this implementation as an incentive for businesses in the bidding process.

Finally, we must encourage the circular economy in New York City which has the potential to dramatically reduce our waste output but also costs for businesses and taxpayers. For example, in order to reduce costs for the craft beverage and urban agriculture industries, we can facilitate connections to sell low-cost organic waste from the brewing process to urban farming businesses.

### Protecting People and Natural Resources

All New Yorkers deserve indoor and outdoor environments that are free of contamination and pollution. We will promote policies that provide access to healthy air and water, protect our open spaces, and improve the well-being of all New Yorkers.

#### 9. Parks, Natural Areas, and Active Waterfronts (p. 9)

As mentioned earlier, I am committed to increasing the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation's budget to the Percent for Parks model as well as fostering connections to conservancies like the Trust for Public Land that can help deliver capital improvement projects on time and under budget.

And we must utilize parklands and natural areas along our waterfront as part of our resiliency strategy. These open spaces can soften our waterfront edges and protect our property. We must not only view these locations as amenities but integral to weathering

future storms brought on by climate change. This is why I secured funding from New York State to study how we can utilize the Brooklyn Greenway as a stormwater and storm surge tool in Red Hook and Sunset Park.

#### 10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

For lead paint and other conditions inside buildings that put New Yorkers at risk, I would put the pressure on the private side and disincentivize bad behavior by property owners. That includes the biggest slumlord, NYCHA. If a NYCHA resident has lead in their apartment, they

shouldn't have to pay rent, period, until it's removed. Something tells me that will speed up remediation.

The lead poisoning epidemic is also an example of our dysfunctional government--and not just at NYCHA. If we had a proper and proactive healthcare system that was logically partnered with DOE, and one set of information on each and every New Yorker that was shared across agencies, we would identify lead poisoning and other diseases earlier, treat them more effectively, and even be able to identify clusters and the causes of those clusters.

And while this is a horrible living environment, this also provides NYCHA residents with a significant economic development opportunity. NYCHA must hire and train residents in lead remediation. We must view these challenges as opportunities for economic advancement.

#### 11. Reduce and Mitigate Heat Vulnerability (p. 9 – 10)

In addition to planting more trees and investing and expanding the Cool Neighborhoods program to combat the urban heat island effect, I will do more to build and retrofit net-zero energy buildings.

The Brooklyn Borough Board passed my resolution in 2016 to adopt Passive House Design standards which strive for net-zero energy outputs in buildings. Brooklyn is now the Passive House capitol of the United States. As mayor, I would incorporate Passive House design into the City's retrofit accelerator.

## 12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

To both protect the environment and make an investment that will save the City money on fuel and maintenance savings, we will significantly speed up our conversion to an entirely electric bus fleet. This can be achieved by raising money through the City's capital program to pay for the higher up-front cost of the vehicles against the long-term benefits.

New Yorkers spend roughly \$19 billion per year on energy and it happens through the city's highly interdependent electricity, natural gas, and steam networks. This infrastructure is considered some of the oldest and most concentrated in the nation. By upgrading our electrical grid, transitioning our power source to wind and away from natural gas, and implementing traffic controls to reduce idling, we can improve the quality of life of New Yorkers and create thousands of new jobs, especially those in low-income communities

facing environmental injustice. These investments are not only the moral path to take, they also make common economic sense because they will create good paying jobs for New Yorkers and businesses will be able to rely on resilient infrastructure in the face of a rapidly changing climate.

## 13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

I partnered with local groups and DEP to create an Adopt-A-Storm Basin program to clear out storm basins in advance of large weather events and funded a study with the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative to develop a Greenway Stormwater Management Design Guide and Plan.

As Mayor, I will expand funding for DEP's Green Infrastructure Program and facilitate coordination between all agencies charged with surface responsibilities to ensure we are utilizing permeable pavement, installing bioswales and doing all we can to deliver the cleanest and healthiest water to our residents.

As part of this, we must also improve transparency on the rate setting for water rates in New York City. This important rate setting process allows the DEP to fully fund our water protection infrastructure and services but we must ensure that taxpayers are engaged in the decision-making process when rate hikes are being considered.

#### 14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

To be a true leader in environmental protection, NYC must be a leader in sustainable food systems. The food system accounts for 21-37% of global greenhouse gas emissions and is a significant driver of deforestation, biodiversity loss, water use, and land-system change. Research shows that we will not meet temperature targets without changing the ways in which we produce and consume food. Cities have an especially important role to play, as they consume most of the world's food. (According to C40 Cities, "In 2017, emissions associated with food consumption in C40 cities accounted for an estimated 13% of cities' total greenhouse gas emissions, with consumption of animal-sourced food representing roughly 75% of those food emissions.") It is time that NYC accelerates the cultivation of a healthy, just, and sustainable food system.

During my tenure as borough president, I released a report on the untapped potential of urban agriculture, *The New Agrarian Economy*. This report supports the expansion of both community and commercial urban agriculture in New York City through concrete, comprehensive actions. We will launch an Office of Urban Agriculture under my Administration, which will prioritize the follow-through of said comprehensive plan. This report and my agenda demand an analysis of the City's Zoning Resolution and building and fire codes to promote the industry as well as enhancement of nutrition assistance programs, including SNAP, Health Bucks, and farmers markets.

My dedication to sustainable and healthy eating in schools is demonstrated by my \$20,000 worth of allocation for Farmshelf, a project which integrated a comprehensive hydroponics curriculum for students at Brooklyn Democracy Academy to learn how to grow, distribute, produce, write code and create applications for, build, and maintain the vegetation units.

This effort not only proved the value of growing healthy food, but enhanced student attendance and participation. As reported by then Principal Dez Ann Romaine, who passed last year due to COVID-19, students were showing up on time, spending more time in the hydroponic lab, and eating healthier. Teaching kids about the importance of sustainable food is a pathway to ensuring the future of the system is better.

Furthermore, because NYC spends nearly \$1 billion on food, we must leverage our tremendous purchasing power to accelerate climate and food justice. In addition to tracking its emissions from food procurement and consumption, NYC can join 14 other cities, including Los Angeles, in becoming a signatory of the C40 Good Food Cities Declaration. This declaration would allow NYC to increase its procurement of healthy and sustainable food as well as to decrease its food loss and waste. These actions would ensure that NYC meets important climate goals, and at the same time, facilitate New Yorkers of all backgrounds in gaining access to food that meets high nutritional and environmental standards. NYC can further demonstrate its commitment to a better food system by expanding programs such as Get the Good Stuff (a nutrition incentive program that encourages SNAP participants to purchase fruits, vegetables, and beans) and divesting from industrial animal agriculture, a top contributor to climate change. Sustainable food policy is one of my top priorities, and I plan to continue prioritizing this area as mayor.