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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: Farah N. Louis

Office sought & district number: City Council Member, District 45

Campaign email: [friendsoffarahlouis@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoffarahlouis@gmail.com)

Campaign phone: (347) 893-5464

Website: [www.farahlouis.com](http://www.farahlouis.com)

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FarahFor45/>

Twitter handle: <https://twitter.com/farahlouis?lang=en>

Campaign manager's name and email: Naomi/[FriendsofFarahLouis@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofFarahLouis@gmail.com)

Press Secretary's name and email: Tanisha/[Tanisha@therebelleagency.com](mailto:Tanisha@therebelleagency.com)

Scheduler's name and email: Carline Chery/[FriendsofFarahLouis@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofFarahLouis@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.

During my last 16 months serving as Council Member for Council District 45, I have been passionate about addressing Environmental Protection citywide and within Council District 45. During that time I have co-sponsored numerous bills, such as INTRO 1650-A, a bill that would require HRA to provide information about the Health Bucks program and farmers' markets in the city to all individuals who receive or apply to receive supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits. I also co-sponsored INTRO 1942, a bill mandating DSNY to establish and operate at least three organics drop off sites in each community district and INTRO 12266, a bill that would require the DOT to launch a pilot program for shared electric scooters.

In addition, we learned during the COVID Pandemic that 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. Our parks have been a refuge for families throughout this pandemic. One of my proudest achievements this year was securing capital funds from the Mayor and Speaker to build the first recreation center at Nostrand Park in Council District 45. We were able to come together as neighbors to identify this centralized location for youth, adults, and seniors to engage in year-round programming utilizing both indoor and outdoor recreational space.

## 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.

#### 2. Encouraging the Shift to High Efficiency, Low Emission Forms of Transportation (p. 3)

So far the city has already launched the Nostrand Avenue, Kings Highway, Rogers Avenue and Utica Avenue SBS lanes within my district, which provides a faster link to the  $\frac{3}{4}$  Utica Avenue Subway Station as well as the B/Q Newkirk Train station for a number of my constituents. I am currently working with my local Community Boards and the Department of Transportation to preserve parking for homeowners in my community but we seek to also collaborate as a community and identify areas that would be best for bike lanes. I support the Better Bus Plan and truly believe this will expand opportunities for constituents living in my district who do not have access to their own private vehicle.

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.

#### 3. Conserving New York City’s Parks and Natural Areas (p. 3)

As a Council Member with a district with limited park space, my commitment to conserving NYC’s Parks and natural areas is critical. Our parks have been a refuge for families throughout this pandemic. During the peak of the pandemic, I supported legislation that would allow our

communities to participate in Open Streets. The value of open green spaces is clear and my goal is to support the New York City Policy Agenda and help contribute to the well-being of New Yorkers to address climate change and support programs and initiatives that promote clean air and utilization of green 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. Common Sense Waste Management (p. 3)

During my first month as Council Member in 2019, I supported the Mayor's citywide organics recycling program and funded organizations through the City Council initiative to provide services to support environmental justice efforts. My level of commitment to common sense waste management is high and I am dedicated to continuing to support efforts that promote waste reduction.

### 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)

My commitment to energy infrastructure is high. As such I have co-sponsored Intro 1592 which requires jurisdiction over Rikers Island to be transferred to the Department of Environmental Protection for renewable energy generation or other environmental purposes at the appropriate point when the population of detainees subside.

#### 6. Transportation (p. 5)

Council District 45 encompasses particular neighborhoods that fall in the scope of what would be considered a transit desert. My goal as the Council Member is to find alternatives to support constituents seeking ways to move around the district and within New York City. I am committed to increasing access to clean and sustainable transportation, which is why I co-

sponsored legislation that promotes implementation of ferry service, as well as scooter and bike-share programs.

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

Coastal Resiliency is important as a robust plan that can protect vulnerable communities living in low lying coastal areas along coastlines during major storm events and rising sea levels. As a result of this, I support strengthening current zoning codes to protect homes in vulnerable areas along the coastline, as well as coastal retreating that includes the restoration of wetlands such as Jamaica Bay. To this end I co-sponsored Intro 1620 for the creation of a comprehensive five borough plan to protect the entire shoreline from climate change, sea level rise and sunny day flooding.

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

Council District 45 has a large population of low-income and middle class families. Charging for trash collection based on the volume of waste being thrown away can disproportionately affect constituents that already deal with the disparities of being a marginalized population of people within New York City. Using this method as a means to achieve conservation can potentially alienate those who have historically been oppressed and using policies to further that oppression is reminiscent of other policies that maintain poverty. I am committed to support plans that address solid waste issues but I need to ensure that all constituents can obtain the resources.

### 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)

My commitment is high. I have supported, through the Parks Equity Initiative at the City Council, the efforts of the City Parks Foundation and their work to make parks programming accessible to all NYC residents. Active waterfronts are important, to that end I have also co-sponsored Intro 1620 for the creation of a comprehensive five borough plan to protect the entire shoreline from climate change, sea level rise and sunny day flooding.

10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

During my tenure in the City Council, I have been vocal and demanded city agencies provide a massive environmental remediation program of lead in schools Citywide with aging infrastructure that needed major attention before students returned for in-person learning. As a member of the Education Committee of the City Council, I joined colleagues and co-sponsored intro 864, a bill that would mandate DOHMH to investigate a building-wide (parks, playgrounds, daycare centers, preschools and schools) inspection for lead if a child of an applicable age with an elevated blood lead level resides in a building where the lead level in water supplied for drinking or cooking exceeds the water lead action level, or where a lead-based paint hazard exists. I am committed to the continuity of preventative measures from lead poisoning.

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

I am committed to reducing and mitigating heat vulnerability of all New Yorkers, especially the senior population. To that end, I support the expansion of our cool neighborhoods program to protect our seniors and other vulnerable New Yorkers from the heat.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

As our City grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, I am committed to supporting efforts to implement cleaner technologies to ensure we have clean air for all. I co-sponsored Intro 455 requiring all school buses under a city contract to be replaced with buses that are powered by electricity or in other cases renewable fuel sources. In addition, I will advocate for the MTA to implement cleaner technological options overtime to support our goal.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

As such, I will support the city's ongoing efforts to install pervious pavement, as well as the installation of bioswales and rain gardens.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

I am committed to a sustainable food system that provides healthy food citywide and creates sustainable environmental, economic and social systems that surround food justice. To this end, I have co-sponsored Intro 1650A, which would require the Human Resources Administration to provide information about the Health Bucks program and farmers' markets in the city to all individuals who receive or apply to receive supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits.