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

Campaign Contact Information

Candidate name: Felicia Singh

Office sought & district number: City Council, District 32

Campaign e-mail: info@felicia2021.com

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Campaign manager's name and email: Steph Caballero, cm@feliciasinghnyc.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.

When I was Vice-President of Our Neighbors Civic Association of Ozone Park, we led many community clean-ups and talked often about how litter impacts our environment and our quality of life.

I live in a coastal district, which is home to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Maintaining and preserving spaces like the refuge and marshes along the district is so important because they also assist in absorbing rainwater. Open green spaces like the ones we have in our district are vital for climate mitigation and being able to enjoy our open spaces as a community member is a privilege. This is why I want to continue to work hard in preserving all our open spaces in D32.

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)

District 32 is a transportation desert where it takes our community members 1-2 hours to get from our district to Manhattan. If we want to reduce emissions, our transportation systems need to be safer and more reliable for use. This means creating more express trains that get us to and from Manhattan in 30 minutes. This investment in effective and reliable public transportation will encourage reduced use of single occupancy vehicles. By advocating for this level of public transportation, we are not only supporting our community by reducing carbon emissions and air pollution, but investing in their access to jobs.

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)

District 32 is an incredibly unique district which includes a plethora of open spaces - the beach, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, and Forest park. We should be investing in utilizing all open space on the shoreline to create safe and clean recreational spaces for children and families. In order to do this effectively, there must be investment in Sanitation to ensure equitable cleanliness in the district as well as providing community jobs for our neighbors.

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)

As a teacher I strongly believe that if we want to reach the City's Zero Waste goal by 2030, we need to provide our communities with not only the tools they need to adapt, but with education. When our community was introduced to our city's organics collection system. Brown bins were placed outside of homes with a flyer of what is considered 'organic waste,' but what we saw happen across our city was that this did not become an economical plan. Not enough organics were being separated by homes or by

sanitation. DSNY Commissioner halted the expansion of this program in order to identify ways to improve participation. I was so excited to participate in this program and understood how our family would need to shift the way we separate waste in order to participate. However, like many families, this all seemed like an extra step and my parents didn't understand how we were aiding to the greater good of the planet. The education portion about the organic waste and how our City can help curb emissions is missing from initiatives like this - by investing in this, we can work towards the Zero Waste goal.

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)

There is so much work to be done infrastructure-wise and there are many opportunities for employment and just development: green roofs and more green spaces are needed to mitigate the urban heat island effect in our communities; we can build community-owned solar farms and wind farms, create a new, resilient power grid and infrastructure that runs on renewable energy; make the necessary and long overdue repairs to ensure NYCHA residents have a safe, dignified place to live; we can create urban farms and hydroponic farms to make sure people have access to healthy, fresh, inexpensive, locally-sourced food in our food deserts. All of these community programs will create thousands of well-paying, meaningful jobs for people in our communities thus empowering the community by making sure that community members are not only consulted but are more so granted ownership over the planning of these programs to best meet the diverse needs and desires of their communities. I believe that the POC in our communities that have been harmed the most by environmental racism, COVID-19, and systemic injustice should be given the training needed for these jobs and given priority in the hiring process.

City Council is considering a proposal for offshore wind farms, one of which will be off the coast of the Rockaways in our District. This is incredibly exciting and important because these are the projects we need in order for our communities to move toward a just energy transition. Our goal as a City is to make 70% of electricity carbon free by

2030 and offshore wind farms could help us get there. It is reported by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, this project reduces carbon emissions to the 'equivalent of 1 million cars off the road.' This particular project will also create 5,000 green new jobs and "nearly 2,000 of these jobs are in operations and maintenance (O&M), providing sustained career opportunities for New Yorkers as the average OSW facility life span is at least 25 years." UPROSE, a team of organizers behind one of Brooklyn's oldest CBO, recognizes that all projects like the offshore wind project must play an integral role in ensuring that community leaders are a part of the decision making process. It is especially important that our immigrants and communities of color are stakeholders in this project because climate change disproportionately impacts these same communities. Another project that excites me are plans to bring a Green New Deal to NYCHA because it helps eliminate carbon emissions, reduce utility costs for residents and creates jobs (that hire residents). This project is especially important because when our communities are hit with hurricanes or storms, we need reliable energy sources that are resilient like wind and solar.

Finally, utility reform is one we need badly in our city because it presents a deep rooted equity issue; our energy should be publicly-owned and controlled power. Our utility should be locally owned and everyone should have reliable access to the Internet, hot water, and electricity. Our energy supply is one that is an equity issue-one we've experienced-every time there is a storm in our communities.

6. Transportation (p. 5)

Supporting a multitude of transportation options addresses many issues at once. By investing in clean/green and public transportation we are committing to our communities in order to invest in reducing our carbon footprint. This means we must support expansion and accessibility of our buses and bike lanes, along with bolstering our public train transportation.

7. Resiliency (p. 6)

Resiliency should be focused on infrastructure and other physical design features that can allow the City to recover from climate-related events. Our sewer system is a hundred years

old and out of date, it needs to be upgraded to avoid the frequent flooding that occurs in our district; we need more green spaces to absorb the rainwater from the increasing severity of storms and to mitigate the urban heat island effect, and we must ensure our coastlines are protected with groins and jetties where applicable to slow erosion and provide more protection from extreme weather conditions.

8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

As previously mentioned, we must invest in education around Common Sense Waste Management and organics collections. Additionally, we must reinvest in curbside composting pickup throughout the district and create more drop off sites in South Queens - at least 2 on the peninsula and 5 throughout the North part of the district. In order to effectively do so, we need to expand organic waste processing facilities in the city and effectively host virtual education on how to effectively participate in composting; this includes what can and cannot be composted, how to access drop off sites, and training volunteers to participate in site support.

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)

Parks and green space can and should be a part of our environmental resiliency plans. This could look like planting more trees, installing solar panels for lighting at night, and practicing composting. In designing parks, we must also create more space that helps mitigate flooding.

Finally, we must ensure equity in our open green spaces. During COVID, wealthier neighborhoods have benefited the most from our city's implementation of open streets and cleaner parks. We need to allocate funds to our parks department who assist with the maintenance of free and open spaces in District 32 and in our city.



10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

We must prioritize our community’s safety in their own homes by ensuring that the building materials used are free of lead. This includes the use of lead free paint and lead free water pipes. This also includes updates to NYCHA complexes where residents are exposed to lead poisoning.

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

District 32 is vulnerable to heat because of proximity to the ocean. Green roofs and more green spaces are needed to mitigate the urban heat island effect in our communities.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

I support the efforts to move our city buses toward electric power. We can reduce emissions by encouraging public transportation use and providing a strong alternative to single rider transport.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

Currently, there is no infrastructure in NYC where agencies and community members are discussing and building a climate and environmental resilience plan. In order to accomplish more adaptation of green infrastructure, which support, clear water for all, we need to bring the community and city agencies together to govern and create an integrated climate and environmental resilience plan.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

I support city-based relief to make sure that no NYC resident is left without food during the current public health and economic crisis, regardless of immigration status.

I also believe that we need to be building infrastructure to end food deserts and food insecurity in the city. City Council can fight for funding so that groups like Teens for Food Justice, who build hydroponic farms in city high schools (that the students then learn to farm- the produce is used in the cafeteria and extra crops are distributed amongst the students and local community), can build a hydroponic farm or rooftop farm in all schools. We can fight to turn vacant land into urban farms, then train and pay local residents to be employed as farmers.