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## 2021 Environmental Questionnaire for Westchester 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 Westchester 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](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.
- General election endorsements will be made by the NYLCV State Board on July 29, 2021.

### CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Candidate name: George Latimer

Office sought (& district number if applicable): Westchester County Executive

Campaign e-mail: Latimer2021@gmail.com

Campaign phone: (Temporary) 914-565-9760

Website: LatimerforWestchester.com

Facebook page: Latimer for Westchester County Executive

Twitter handle: (Temporary) @RyeGSL

Campaign manager's name and email: Andrew Ferris - ferrisa9250@gmail.com

Press Secretary's name and email: Joseph Sgammato - josephnsgammato@gmail.com

Scheduler's name and email: TBD

### 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.

**I have been in public office at the small city, county and State level; throughout each position, I have supported and advanced environmental initiatives. As a State Assemblyman and Senator for 13 years, I sponsored and cosponsored important legislation to protect wetlands, incentivize solar initiatives, address climate change, and a myriad of other issues. Previously, as a County Legislator and Chairman of the County Board of Legislators, I prioritized the work of local environmental efforts on hazardous chemical clean-up, LI Sound and Hudson River protections and the like. I am honored to have been endorsed by NYLCV and other environmental groups in**

**past campaigns, and will continue to work to improve our environment here in Westchester as we have done over the last four years as County Executive.**

**No Administration is ever perfect; we have made strides in these four years, but the COVID pandemic redirected much of our energy and focus away from this and other areas of public policy. I seek a second (and final term- two-term County Executive term limits) four year term as we get back to normal, to advance the unfinished business of our current term. We have put in place a good team; Petrr McCartt leads our environmental efforts along with our Commissioner of Planning, Norma Drummond. I'm hopeful we will accomplish significantly more in the years ahead.**

## **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 Westchester 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)

Under our four year Administration, we have advanced our Solar Program Phase I and II to develop solar collection capacity on County-owned facilities such as rooftops and parking lots. We have collaborated with the Community Solar Partnership to advance solar capacity in private as well as public settings; we have worked closely with Sustainable Westchester on energy education programs. We have contracted with Nu-Energen for electricity reduction during peak demands periods, and we are implementing a program to capture methane energy at our Yonkers wastewater treatment plant.

## 3. Transportation (p.5)

The County has launched programs to transition our Bee Line Bus fleet from diesel to hybrid and electric vehicles, and have received Federal funds to help us advance this effort; a similar transition is underway - including a cooperative vehicle purchasing arrangement with Suffolk County - for our standard fleet of cars. We have passed legislation to advance this effort with more EV charging stations; we are placing such stations on County-owned land in numerous locations to help build the EV infrastructure (e.g. 10 charging stations at the North White Plains RR station in a County owned parking lot). We are working as well to implement Complete Streets standards where we have County road projects (e.g. a separate bicycle/walking pathway created alongside Playland Parkway).

## 4. Resiliency (p. 6)

We have launched and advanced numerous efforts to ensure greater resiliency: hardening the infrastructure at our seven wastewater treatment plants; stormwater management at the County Airport, to retain stormwater runoff and deicing fluid runoff and avoid pollution into the LI Sound via Blind Brook; efforts to work with groups such as Save the Sound to reduce inflow and infiltration; our shoreline pilot program at Read Sanctuary and elsewhere to restore natural filtration; our rain barrel project for homeowners; and continued study of environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Bronx River.

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

We have seen a rise in our recycling collection efforts and percentages, and are preparing to modernize our Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Yonkers with a capital project; we re-established the regional Household Waste collection days around the County to great citizen response; we created a model composting site on our Grasslands campus (CompostEd) to help incentivize towns and villages to compost more of their food scraps and other products; we have taken on the transportation costs for municipal food waste recycling making it affordable for more communities to offer such recycling; we negotiated our 10 year renewal contract with Wheelabrator to allow for a carve out of compostable waste tonnage. Our new Planting Westchester program, our work with Feeding Westchester; the Recycle Right initiative all represent additional innovative efforts.

Protecting People and Natural Resources

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

6. Clean Land, Air, and Water (p. 9)

We have undertaken a major project, as part of a mutual consent agreement with NYSDEC, to protect the integrity of our Rye Lake reservoir, adjacent to the County Airport, and remediate any PFAS pollution stemming back to the 1980s. We reestablished well testing at the Airport, and are spending significant capital to ensure clean water at that site. We are implementing my Executive Order to ensure native plants are standard across County owned sites, to stop invasive species that threaten our waters - and where we have invasives (e.g. Tibbets Brook Pond in Yonkers) we have aggressive on-going efforts to remove those invasives. Our previously mentioned conversion from diesel and gas-powered vehicles to electric represent our continued effort towards clean air.

7. Sustainable Development (p. 10)

Aside from the other initiatives spoken of, we are working to steer new economic development into our developed corridors and away from open space. In our developed corridors we have existing infrastructure (as well as a workforce population) that can properly support business growth and expansion, without impacting the open spaces that provide environmental benefit to all. We thereby reduce extra transportation movements and other stresses that are typical in "suburban sprawl". It must be noted New York State maintains local Home Rule over land

use and our County (regional) efforts are secondary to local primary control, and we thereby use our influence and resources to help create a positive result.

8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.10 – 11)

As County Executive, we have made a renewed effort to invest in our parks and open space; appointing J. Henry Neale to Chair our Parks Board, we have had a more robust citizen involvement in all our public efforts. Restoring our North County Trailway, rehabilitating the historic Miller House/Washington HQs and upgrades across our parks system such as Scout Field shows that we have put these issues high on our list, after years of previous neglect. We are working with the Westchester Land Trust and other groups to expand the footprint of our already significant protections of open soace.

9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

Alongside our previously mentioned efforts of Planting Westchester, and work with Feeding Westchester, we have invested capital resources for the county-owned Hilltop Hanover Farm after years of neglect, and Muscoot Farm. Our efforts for agricultural tourism, and for local farmers markets, have made this area of public policy more prominent in our Administration than in years past. But we have much more we can do in this area.