



30 Broad Street – 30th Floor
New York, NY 10004
212-361-6350

politics@nylcv.org / www.nylcv.org

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: Kamillah Hanks

Office sought & district number: New York City Council, 49th District

Campaign e-mail: hanksforcitycouncil@gmail.com

Campaign phone: 917-714-4205

Website: hanks2021.nyc

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

Twitter handle: @KamillahMHanks

Campaign manager's name and email: Paul Casali, paulcasali0974@gmail.com

Press Secretary's name and email: Jaclyn Tacaronte, jaclyn@jmtmedia.com

Scheduler's name and email: Paul Casali, paulcasali0974@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.

A pro-environment agenda is important to me both personally and professionally. In 2012, I founded the Historic Tappen Park Community Partnership, where I work with civic leaders, community groups, and local schools to boost cultural and economic development in Stapleton, Staten Island surrounding neighborhoods. I have worked with several organizations, including the Snug Harbor Cultural Center, to promote NYC parks, gardens, clean-ups, and promote sustainable food systems. Through my YouthBuild organization, of which I am the founder, we are working with NYC Parks to build a greenhouse on Staten Island where residents are able to grow their own fruits and vegetables and learn about the benefits of fresh food. We also conduct horticulture training and work with the Staten Island Zoo's pollination gardens.

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)

Residents of my district rely mostly on busses for public transit, so access to affordable, efficient public transportation is one of my highest priorities. I support transportation initiatives like the reallocation of street space for busways to provide faster commute times, incentivize public transportation usage, and reduce carbon emissions by reducing the number of vehicles on the roads.

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)

In 2012 I founded The Historic Tappen Park Community Partnership, a non-profit that utilizes Tappen Park in Stapleton, Staten Island as a community center to encourage economic development and community engagement. I know first-hand how valuable NYC parks are to our communities, and I am committed to ensuring that we invest in our parks and that adequate funding is provided to underfunded parks in low-income areas.

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)

Staten Island is an example of the progress we need across NYC on waste management. We were home to the largest garbage dump in the world that was polluting our air and water, but now Staten Island's recycling center is responsible for managing half of NYC's paper waste and a composting facility that manages residential compost for DSNY. The success of these facilities is proof of the importance of investing in efficient waste management. I support using unoccupied space like Rikers Island to create more waste management facilities like those on Staten Island and continuing programs that have proven to be effective in reducing waste like the brown bin program.

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)

I support allocating resources and funding for the implementation of Local Law 97 to retrofit large commercial buildings to meet carbon emissions caps by 2024. Encouraging funding for oversight and implementation is crucial to make sure LL97 is effective in helping to meet NYC's goal of 80% emissions reduction by 2050.

6. Transportation (p. 5)

Expanding access to public transportation on Staten Island is one of my top priorities. 73% of commuters in my district rely on busses to make one of the longest average commutes in the country. It is important that programs like the North Shore Bus Rapid Transit project be reinstated to provide increased access to busses for Staten Island residents to reduce commute times and carbon emissions from personal vehicles, and it will be a top priority of mine as a Council Member.

7. Resiliency (p. 6)

Hurricane Sandy showed Staten Islanders exactly how urgently NYC needs resiliency programs to protect our coasts from increasingly deadly storms brought on by climate change. I support

protecting the most vulnerable from flooding and storm damage by investing in infrastructure along our shores that will defend against storm surges, floods, and rising sea levels.

8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

I support continuing successful recycling, composting and other waste management programs that have proven to be effective in reducing waste and emissions. NYC schools and other public buildings should continue to move away from disposable, single use utensils while educating city residents about the impacts of waste on climate change. I am committed to prioritizing low income communities and communities of color who bear the brunt of pollution when considering policy initiatives on waste reduction and management.

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)

I have extensive experience with parks, and I have been a community advocate for the importance of parks in low income areas for years. NYC parks are important community spaces that provide opportunities for community engagement and are essential to combat climate change. I will fight for funding to protect and conserve our parks and natural areas throughout the city to help strengthen community relationships and improve air quality, reduce heat and serve as green infrastructure.

10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

There is a need for enforcement of Local Law 1 that provides protection for children living in rental properties. It is important that the City hold landlords accountable for lead testing and ensuring that property managers are in compliance with the law. I am also committed to providing educational resources to my constituents about lead poisoning risk in housing and in NYC public schools.

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

My district is the most vulnerable area to heat on Staten Island, so I understand the importance of investing in programs that provide assistance to communities that are most vulnerable to heat. We should continue to subsidize energy bills for low-income NYC

residents during the summer months so they can afford to use air-conditioning units. I also support city programs like the Get Cool program that tackles heat vulnerability while providing quality green jobs and job training opportunities.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

I will use my experience in the private sector to work with private businesses and developers to promote affordable electrification of buildings and vehicles. The city should continue to make tax incentives available to developers and businesses that prioritize energy efficiency to reduce NYC's carbon emissions.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

Investing in green infrastructure is essential to ensuring clean water for all in NYC. I support providing more grants and incentives for green infrastructure on private properties while investing in public parks and green spaces to ease the burden on the city's wastewater systems.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

My organization, Youth Build Staten Island, worked with the Snug Harbor Heritage Farm on Staten Island to plant an acre of fresh fruits, thereby promoting the farm-to-table program. I am an advocate for access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The FRESH program should be about improving public health outcomes by increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables. I support equitable access to safe and healthy food, and will champion that cause in the City Council.