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## 2021 Environmental Questionnaire for Long Island 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 Long Island 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: Laura Curran

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

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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.

Throughout my first term as County Executive, I have prioritized a pro-environment agenda. I understand that the health of Nassau's environment and the health and economic success of Nassau residents are inextricably linked. Under my administration, Nassau County has taken steps to preserve the environment both in the immediacy and the future.

In 2019, I signed a bill banning the use of single-use plastic foam in order to better protect Nassau's waterways.

In 2019, Nassau County committed to the largest environmental infrastructure project in our lifetime, entering into a unique partnership with the New York State Department of Environment Conservation to vastly improve water quality while helping increase resiliency to coastal flooding through the Bay Park Conveyance Project. The project will not only improve water quality for fishing, swimming and other recreational activities, but will restore Nassau's precious South Shore ecosystem and help protect Long Island against storm surge.

My administration is also currently providing up to 10,000 in grants for homeowners and small businesses to replace failing septic systems with state-of-the-art nitrogen-reducing septic systems, which will help in Nassau's effort to reduce nitrogen and other pollutants.

Nassau County also joined the Climate Smart Communities pledge in 2020, in order to tackle the challenge of climate change in a collaborative and proactive way. Through this program, Nassau has committed to keep an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions to establish baseline and reduction goals for County government operations, decrease its energy use, reduce solid waste generation and promote the reuse and recycling of items, and protect biodiversity and water quality throughout the County.

My administration heavily invested in public transit, supporting the first new major LIRR station in 50 years. I am dedicated to building a transit system of the future here in Nassau by promoting greener transportation options; reducing single-occupancy vehicle travel and supporting emerging technology and renewable fuel vehicles.

We are taking full advantage of greener energy, leveraging offshore wind farms currently being built off the coast of Long Island to create more jobs in Nassau.

Our County's Department of Public Works is also working to bring Electric Vehicle charging stations to County buildings and properties for public use.

All of these efforts reflect my commitment to making Nassau a more sustainable, cleaner, greener place to live. It is imperative that we address the environmental issues facing our County and ensure we take steps to reduce the impacts of climate change.

## 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 Long Island 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)

I am committed to reducing fossil fuel emissions and increasing Nassau's reliance on renewable energy. I am excited to harness the economic potential of the green energy industry for our local businesses and our workforce. Offshore wind provides a great opportunity for more jobs in Nassau, and I am working hard to make sure we leverage

this

golden opportunity. With two offshore wind farms already being built off the coast of Long Island, we will be generating 1,700 megawatts of clean energy. This is enough to power over 1 million homes, while creating tremendous economic opportunities.

Nassau must build more, and we must build sustainably. In pursuing these projects, I will work in partnership with Nassau's labor communities to establish training and apprenticeship programs to get our residents ready for jobs in new industries.

In addition, my administration created the Enhanced Energy Efficiency Program to help local municipalities in Nassau expedite energy-saving projects and help reduce costs to taxpayers. Working with partners New York Power Authority, PSEG, and the Rockefeller Institute of Government, the County developed concrete methods through which municipalities can implement different energy efficiency initiatives with faster, cheaper, and better results.

I have also insisted on a settlement that ensures the Long Island Power Authority strengthens its role as a public steward acting in the best interests of local communities. Through the County's negotiations with LIPA, I have insisted on the creation of a community advisory board to gather input on the reuse of LIPA's properties as the power generation market evolves to better react to climate change and local needs.

### 3. Transportation (p. 6)

Investments in accessible public transportation reduces the carbon emissions from single use vehicles. As County Executive, I facilitated the dispersal of grants to municipalities including the City of Long Beach, Town of North Hempstead, Village of Freeport, Town of Oyster Bay,

Village of Farmingdale, Town of Hempstead and the Village of Hempstead for specific transit-oriented development projects.

I oversaw renovations of the Rosa Parks Transit Center in Hempstead, which is the main transit hub for the County's NICE Bus system and the busiest transit hub on Long Island. The renovations improved the security, look, and functionality of the center.

I continuously advocated for service improvements to the Long Island Rail Road, which offers locals an easy way to commute and bolsters Long Island's tourism industry. I am fully supporting the construction of the first full-time Long Island Railroad station in almost 50 years. When the Elmont station opens, it will ease congestion, and provide a new green public transit option.

In addition, Nassau County's Department of Public Works is working to bring Electric Vehicle charging stations to County buildings and properties for public use; as well as incorporating electric buses.

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

The County is embarking on the largest environmental infrastructure project in our lifetime. This ambitious water treatment program, in partnership with New York State Department of Environment Conservation, will strengthen the resilience of our coastal lands. The Bay Park Conveyance Project will transport treated sewage water away from the Western Bays, which

have experienced a reduction in coastal resiliency and a loss of coastline due to nitrogen-dense water from the South Shore Water Reclamation Facility.

If we reduce the amount of nitrogen in the water, the marshland will return. The Bay Park Conveyance Project will not only improve water quality for fishing, swimming and other recreational activities, but will restore Nassau's precious South Shore

ecosystem and help protect Long Island against storm surge.

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

I signed a bill to ban the use of single-use plastic foam because non-biodegradable polystyrene cannot be recycled like most products.

My administration's Department of Public Work implemented a robust Litter and Trash campaign called "Clean Roads Start at Home," which aimed to address the many negative consequences that litter and trash have on our roads and parks. In addition to a public education and outreach campaign on litter prevention, the County expanded both the Sponsor-A-Highway litter removal program and street sweeping program.

Nassau County will continue to promote the efficiency of reuse and recycling. We have established public awareness campaigns to educate about green initiatives and encourage residents to be more environmentally responsible.

### Protecting People and Natural Resources

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

#### 6. Clean Water (p. 8 - 9)

In Nassau, clean water is a precious commodity. In addition to the Bay Park Conveyance Project outlined above, my administration is currently providing up to 10,000 in grants for homeowners and small businesses to replace failing septic systems with state-of-the-art nitrogen-reducing septic systems, which will help in Nassau's effort to reduce nitrogen and other pollutants.

Malfunctioning septic systems are one of the leading causes of groundwater pollution on Long Island and one of the leading sources of surface water pollution. By replacing failing septic systems with nitrogen-reducing systems, the environment will have an opportunity to regenerate.

#### 7. Sustainable Development (p. 9)



Following the pandemic, infrastructure is at the heart of Nassau's recovery. I believe making our infrastructure investment green will secure long-term competitiveness, productivity, innovation, lower prices, and higher incomes.

I have called for \$2.08 billion in federal infrastructure stimulus to advance 27 priority projects. These projects would create more than 7,400 full-time construction jobs and generate more than 2.5 billion in economic activity, while utilizing new technologies to make our County greener.

#### 8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.11)

On Long Island, we love our parks, beaches and open spaces. I am committed to keeping these precious spaces clean and accessible to Nassau residents.

The County is restoring and transforming three major parks, including Centennial Park in Roosevelt, Christopher Morley Park in Roslyn, and Inwood Park. We're upgrading amenities at Grant Park in Hewlett, Reverend McKay Preserve in Roosevelt, Bay Park in East Rockaway, Nickerson Beach, and Eisenhower Park, the home of our Veterans Memorial.

#### 9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

The County owns swaths of land that allow for farming in Nassau to occur. The County is committed to preserving open spaces and access to agricultural education.