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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
- 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.
- General election endorsements will be made by the NYLCV State Board on July 29, 2021.

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Candidate name: Laura M. Schaefer

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

Campaign e-mail: lmschaefer11@gmail.com

Campaign phone: (516) 238-9916

Website:

Facebook page:

Twitter handle:

Campaign manager's name and email:

Press Secretary's name and email:

Scheduler's name and email: John Hommel, jhommell1@optonline.net

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.

Over the last year and ½, I have continued to support the water districts in my legislative district in their efforts to abide by the 1, 4 dioxane drinking water standards set forth by New York State. I have also continued to participate in the Navy Grumman Plume RAB meetings to stay on top of the effort to clean up and control the toxic plume in and around Bethpage and the surrounding communities.

More recently, I approved funding and supported capital projects that help to protect the County's air, wildlife and natural resources and helped to establish the Commercial Property Sustainable Energy Loan Program, enabling businesses to access financing to implement renewable energy and efficiency programs within their organization.



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)

With regard to energy, the legislature amended and passed Nassau County’s capital planning process to make sure we included planning for green energy infrastructure projects such as solar power. In addition, myself and the Vice Chair of Planning Development and Environment Committee, Tom McKeivitt, met with Kim Kaiman to discuss the feasibility of introducing an electric vehicle fleet as well as building charging stations throughout the County. Currently, we only have charging stations at Nassau Community College so the conversation is ongoing as to how we can move forward with implementing this plan.

3. Transportation (p. 6)

With regard to transportation in the County, I have continued to support the NICE bus system, which runs on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). As I'm sure you are well aware, CNG produces fewer undesirable gases than the traditional fuels such as diesel, petrol and liquified petroleum gas, thereby posing much less of a threat in the event of a spill. In 2021 specifically, I voted in favor of restoring \$4.5 million dollars in funds in order enable the NICE bus system to continue to operate in Nassau County. Earlier in my current term, I voted in favor of contracts and funding that would create pedestrian and bicycle pathways in various areas of Nassau County, such as along the perimeter of Eisenhower Park. I have also supported grant funding for transit-oriented development projects in Nassau County and supported Nassau County's Complete Streets Policy as well as funding for infrastructure maintenance throughout the County. More recently we also approved the funding for approximately 26 hybrid police vehicles.

4. Resiliency (p. 6 - 7)

One of the most important projects I have supported as a legislator is the Bay Park Conveyance Project. This contract was created between Nassau County and New York State to dramatically improve the water quality of the Western Bays by removing and moving the discharge of treated wastewater effluent into Reynolds Channel from the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant. Upon completion, the new system will tremendously improve the water quality and storm resiliency in the Western Bays of Long Island by restoring tidal wetlands, providing greater protection against flooding and improving the conditions for aquatic and wildlife to grow and flourish.

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

With regard to solid waste, I have supported the banning of Styrofoam, plastic bags and the creation of a special revenue fund for the cleanup of Nassau County properties including parks, beaches and ponds. Over the last year I have sponsored or co-sponsored at least 4 Shed the Meds programs in my district. These programs enable residents to drop off their unused prescription and over the counter medications for safe and environmentally friendly

disposal by the Nassau County Police Department. I expect to continue sponsoring these programs throughout the remainder of this term as well.

I have also worked consistently with the Towns of Oyster Bay, Hempstead and North Hempstead and the local sanitation districts to promote the responsible disposal of hazardous waste and electronic equipment found in many people's homes.

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)

Clean water is a hot topic these days and extremely important to our residents. As mentioned in the answer to question #1, I have been very involved in supporting the efforts to contain and eradicate the toxic Navy-Grumman Plume that exists in and around Bethpage, South Farmingdale, Massapequa and neighboring communities. I have done this by lobbying New York State and the federal government for additional funding to address these contamination issues and by approving easements for the construction of remedial systems to address the groundwater cleanup. In a similar vein, I have also approved the granting of easements for the Port Washington Water District to address and clean-up the groundwater contamination issues that were impacting local public water supplies on the north shore. I have passed legislation to require annual public reporting of Nassau County's water supplies including the identification of any contaminants and what treatment systems are being used to remove those contaminants so that all residents can have more detailed information on what is being done to keep their water clean.

I also approved the creation of and funding for the Long Island Commission on Aquifer Protection which was created to identify threats to LI's drinking water. This Commission was created in conjunction with Suffolk County so that we can work together to address any issues of contamination that may arise, track the threats we find and prevent their return.

I also approved funding for the contract that will provide for the County's storage tank replacement program. This program addresses the removal of both above ground and underground storage tanks when they are especially old, have failed the periodic tightness tests or actually do have a leak and need to be replaced.

7. Sustainable Development (p. 9)

On Sustainable Development, I voted to adopt the Climate Smart Communities Pledge which is a commitment on behalf of the County to make progress on the path of sustainability. This includes efforts to decrease energy usage, conversion to renewable energy sources, lowering greenhouse emissions, preservation of open spaces and climate smart land use, exploring and implementing ways to reuse and recycle various materials, evaluating and implementing changes in the County's transportation means and enhancing our natural resilience to the impacts of climate change, especially in and around our beaches and shorelines.

As mentioned earlier in question #1, I also voted to establish the Commercial Property Sustainable Energy Loan Program to enable businesses to implement clean, green, renewable energy systems within their organizations.

Finally, I voted to provide funding for the planting and replanting of trees on various County rights of way, in parks and around County facilities.

8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.11)

On Parks and Open Spaces, I voted to approve Capital Plan spending in the amount of \$5 million dollars to support Local Law 14-2018, which amended the prior County law requiring public access to all active parkland and open space in Nassau County. Through the Environmental Bond Act, Nassau County has purchased hundreds of acres of open space that most residents do not know about and/or are unable to access. This amendment requires the Department of Public Works to place signage on these properties to identify them and to provide parking facilities and identifiable points of ingress and egress to each of them. The DPW is also required to prepare an annual report providing updated information as to all of the open space and active parkland that is owned and operated by Nassau County including information on how to access the land as well as a description of the wildlife and plant life that may be found therein. This information must also be provided on the County's website.

9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

As we typically do, the legislature continues to support funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension so that they can provide programming and educational resources to the public regarding farming, nutrition and sustainable practices for home gardens.

