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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: Leticia Remauro

Office sought & district number: Staten Island Borough President

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Campaign manager's name and email: Joe Kovac RSIconulting@aol.com

Press Secretary's name and email: Jen Remauro EJMarketingandConsulting@gmail.com

Scheduler's name and email:

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 serving in the Pataki administration, I uncovered the fact that the Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island was operating without a permit. I worked with local officials who drafted legislation that ultimately closed the landfill. Later, I was hired at the Battery Park City Authority where I served on the committee to develop the first residential LEED guidelines used to guide the construction of the Solaire, America's first LEED certified residential highrise. In my volunteer role as Chair of Community Board 1, Staten Island, my board adopted the practice of requiring builders seeking a variance to incorporate sustainable construction aspects into their buildings to reduce their carbon footprint. I also supported bike lanes along roads in Staten Island where road width allowed; helped to secure the funds to create Heritage Park along Richmond Terrace; facilitated the future move of the CB1 sanitation garage from a residential community on Jersey Street to be incorporated with the CB 3 sanitation garage on the former Fresh Kills Landfill.

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)

Staten Island is car dependent because we do not have a subway system and our buses move slowly along crowded roads. People need a reason to move from the comfort of their car onto public transportation, especially when ETAs to destinations are the same. I am advocating for the MTA to invest the \$150 million in annual excess revenue generated from the Verrazzano Narrows Bridge (which is earmarked for public transportation improvements in New York City) to be used to install smart traffic lights to keep traffic flowing along bus

routes. When buses move more efficiently than cars, people will be more willing to use public transportation which will reduce emissions.

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)

Since the budget crisis of the 1970s, parks have had to rely on non-profit conservancies for approximately 50% of their operating budget and on the generosity of elected officials for 100% of their capital budget. Amanda Burden showed us the importance of parks in planning communities during her time in the Battery Park City Authority and as NYC Planning Commissioner. As chair of CB 1, I called for parks budget to be fully funded by tax dollars and for the inclusion of a permanent capital budget line for parks in the NYC budget. As Borough President of the "borough of parks" I will focus much of my attention on the upkeep and improvement of Staten Island parks and beaches.

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 Islanders are committed to recycling and composting because we know what it was like to live with the world's largest garbage dump in our own backyard. Construction waste recycling is our next greatest challenge. I have long been a proponent for New York City to provide incentives for bidders who have strong plans for using recycled materials in their jobs. As Borough President, I will make that a focus of my office.

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)

The best way for large cities to do their part in reducing negative impacts on our environment is to reduce the heat island effect from rooftops, adopt LEED practices in ALL city owned buildings, encourage the development of walkable neighborhoods and to support a robust and dependable public transportation system. Human beings seek convenience in all they do so it makes sense for government to make it easier to be environmentally responsible than it is to be wasteful.

6. Transportation (p. 5)

The installation of Smart traffic light technology will keep traffic moving and reduce idling; remove the need for red light and speed cameras which have proven ineffective in reducing pedestrian deaths but very effective in causing driver frustration and anxiety; encourage the growing trend of the next generation of Staten Islanders to get out of their cars and onto a bus. Expanding waterborne transportation will be a focus of my administration. I will also seek to correct the zoning of the island so that the north and west shore waterfronts which are served by public transportation and are based on a walkable neighborhood model can accommodate condominiums and rentals while removing the ability for developers to create out of character developments within the island's interior which is not served by public transportation and cannot accommodate increased traffic. With proper planning, we can reduce vehicular traffic on Staten Island yet make it easier for residents to get around.

7. Resiliency (p. 6)

Resiliency is paramount to the protection of Staten Island. Under my chairmanship, CB 1 offered a plan to build out the waterfront to protect us from flooding along the north shore (portions of which have been built out and one which portion which is in currently in the planning stage). We also required new buildings like The Rail, to incorporate sustainable practices which resulted in their ability to withstand the flooding caused by SuperStorm Sandy. My work in the Battery Park City Authority afforded me the opportunity to be involved in the restoration of its seawall and Pier A, the construction of the floating terminal at the World Financial Center and the maintenance and operation of the North Cove Marina. Working with state and federal officials, I will focus on the creation of natural barriers planted atop recycled barges to create breakwaters, coves and protected boat docks along the Staten Island waterfront.

8. Solid Waste (p. 7)



Getting developers to understand that spending more money up front to construct “green” buildings results in a greater return on investment was a daunting task, but the Battery Park City Authority was able to do it in such a successful way that we changed the construction industry in New York City forever. The key to that accomplishment was offering incentives and convenience. If NYC wants to reduce solid waste it must make it easy for people to do so. Punitive efforts change behavior at a slower rate than offering incentives because it is natural for humans to want to do good. With that said, New York City must lead by example and not skirt recycling regulations for buildings it runs. It should invest in state of the art compacting garbage and recycling bins for our street corners. It should offer developers bonus FAR if they include composting and compacting bins in newly constructed buildings and quicker approvals for building plans that achieve a 40% or better recycled content in construction. These are just a few ways we can reduce solid waste in NYC. I will use my powers to achieve these goals wherever I can.

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)

Staten Island is the “borough of parks”. Now we need the funds to maintain those parks. Fixing a line in the city budget for capital investments in parks and mandating a 2% budget spend for parks operations would be the best way to ensure that our parks and beaches are safe, accessible and available for all to enjoy. This will be a focus of my administration as it was when I served as CB 1 chair.

10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

Providing government incentives for owners to utilize low VOC materials on the interior of buildings will reduce exposure to toxic off gases. The onerous mandates that the city and state put on building owners restricts their ability to improve their buildings. Government must act first to improve the buildings it owns then partner with private building owners so

that they can do the same. As Borough President I will negotiate to achieve these goals.

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

Planted rooftops, white rooftops, light colored street paving materials and increased planted areas are the key to reducing heat islands in large cities. Government must lead the effort to get these things done. As Borough President, I will focus on negotiating with developers seeking approvals to make these things happen and I will instruct my appointees to do the same.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

Reducing traffic, increasing green spaces and encouraging the use of low VOC materials in construction is the best way to improve air quality. As Borough President I will focus on achieving these goals.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

In a city of skyscrapers, New York should be offering incentives for the use of black and grey water systems within buildings as we did in BPCA. On Staten Island, which is made up of mostly 1-2 family homes, protecting and expanding our blue belt is most critical to the goal of clean water for all. Public education to deter pollution of stormwater would also be a focus of my administration.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

Many Staten Island grow their own food in their backyards. My administration will work with parks to provide education, materials and opportunities for people to grow their own food in public spaces, apartments and schools. I would also focus on ensuring that economically disenfranchised neighborhoods have access to fresh fruits and vegetables by aggressively seeking supermarkets to locate nearby. During my service on the board of the Staten Island Downtown Alliance I have helped to develop community gardens and green spaces in empty lots.

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