



NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS
NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND

2025–2026
Long Island
Policy Agenda

FOREWORD

Long Island is known for its coastal beauty and vibrant communities, but as the impacts of climate change continue to grow in both frequency and devastation, this island of more than 8 million people faces a unique set of environmental challenges that require bold action. In the New York League of Conservation Voters/Education Fund’s 2025 Long Island Policy Agenda, we present a roadmap to tackle these challenges head-on and ensure a cleaner, healthier, and more resilient future for the region.

From advancing offshore wind and solar projects to protecting our waterways, modernizing infrastructure, and expanding access to green spaces, the League’s priorities are both ambitious and achievable. This agenda builds on the 2025 NYLCV/EF State Policy Agenda by advocating for strong investments to reduce the use of fossil fuels on Long Island, improve energy efficiency, safeguard drinking water, and make our communities more resilient to the growing impacts of climate change.

We are determined to maximize the transformative funding opportunities available through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, and New York’s Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act. By leveraging these resources, we can create more parks and greenways, ensure clean and safe drinking water, expand access to electric vehicles through a robust charging network, and power homes and businesses with renewable energy.

As always, our work must center on environmental justice, ensuring that all communities—especially those historically underserved—share in the benefits of a cleaner, greener future.

With the collaboration of our partners, policymakers, and the people of Long Island, we can achieve a sustainable future that benefits every community and preserves the natural beauty that makes Long Island so special. Together, let’s turn bold ideas into real results.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Tighe".

JULIE TIGHE

President, NYLCV and NYLCVEF



Installing rooftop solar panels on government-owned buildings, like this school on Long Island, is one of many steps municipalities can take to become certified as a “Climate Smart Community”

CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES

Long Island residents are deeply committed to protecting the environment, and now it’s time for municipalities to lead the charge by moving up the ladder of certification in the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program. This initiative, led by the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), incentivizes actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainability. While some progress has been made—58.9% of Long Island communities have taken the first step by registering as a CSC—there’s still a lot of work to do and a lot of room to grow. Only a small number have reached Bronze certification, and even fewer have achieved Silver. Advancing in the CSC program demonstrates a community’s dedication to building a cleaner, greener future. NYLCV will:

- Support and campaign for CSC actions like the transition to clean fleets, adopting NY Stretch Energy Codes, training governmental staff on Energy Code Enforcement, converting street lights to LED, and implementing Unified Solar Permitting, among other possible actions.
- Look to achieve the Bronze level or higher for 60% of all Long Island Towns, Cities, and Counties by the end of 2030.



South Fork Wind, completed in 2024, is delivering 130 megawatts of clean renewable energy to homes and business on Long Island. (Ørsted)

ENERGY

Our ability to mitigate climate change is dependent on ambitious action to transition to a clean energy economy, and on Long Island that means ramping up renewable energy production—including but not limited to offshore wind—building out battery energy storage systems, implementing resiliency measures, and decarbonizing our buildings.

OFFSHORE WIND.

Long Island has made great progress creating the energy production sources for the future of both the island and the state. Projects like South Fork Wind are already delivering power to New York while other projects like Sunrise Wind are under construction and bringing good quality jobs and the promise of clean energy and reduced air pollution. There are job training centers popping up across Long Island, like the National Offshore Wind Training Center in Brentwood. Supporting these projects is a win for the environment, the workforce, and the economy. NYLCV will help lead the way in the creation of 9 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2035, while increasing New York’s offshore wind goal to 20 gigawatts by 2050 by:

- Advocating for environmentally responsible offshore wind projects during permitting and construction processes.

- Amplifying all the benefits of these projects to surrounding communities.
- Supporting strong labor standards and utilization of registered apprenticeship programs whenever possible.
- Encourage Long Island youth to become involved in off-shore wind industry training and courses.

LOCAL ENERGY RESILIENCY.

Superstorm Sandy and other major weather events have shown the impact that climate change can have on our energy grid. To help build reliance in our energy system while also reducing emissions, NYLCV will:

- Ensure PSEG & LIPA:
 - ▶ Expand renewable energy and efficiency programs.
 - ▶ Improve the storm resiliency of the transmission system.
 - ▶ Make meaningful investments in necessary transmission upgrades with projects like Propel NY.
 - ▶ Encourage the prioritization of the retirement of fossil fuel plants especially those within or near disadvantaged communities.
- Support the opt-out Time-of-Use energy billing system that helps to reduce the burden on the energy grid during peak hours, while also reducing the use of energy and GHG emissions overall.

BUILDINGS.

Our built environment is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in New York, and Long Island is no exception. While only about 4% of houses in the United States use home heating oil, about 40% of houses on Long Island use this dirty fossil fuel. Constructing new clean buildings and converting existing ones to clean heating can dramatically improve our climate and air quality. NYLCV will:

- Encourage the creation of incentives for energy-efficiency upgrades in existing residential and commercial buildings.
- Advocate for the requirement of green building standards and zero-emission heating systems for new residential and commercial construction, like heat pumps for heating and cooling.
- Work to advance the adoption and build-out of thermal energy networks.

SOLAR.

Solar energy is playing a large role in the energy transition across the Northeast and the country. Long Island should lead the way on this front. Unfortunately, some community authorities having jurisdiction can make the process of installing climate-saving solar projects grueling and ultimately not worth the effort, while some communities are even putting in solar moratoriums or front-facing restrictions on solar installations. NYLCV will:

- Advocate for the removal of barriers in local laws and codes to streamline the permit process for installation of renewable energy sources for homeowners and business owners, including by adopting automated solar permitting.
- Encourage authorities having jurisdiction to speed up the process for approval.
- Oppose moratoriums on solar construction and restrictions on its use.
- Support the requirement of the installation of solar panels on new commercial buildings and parking structures where feasible.

STORAGE.

Siting, permitting, and constructing battery storage is the next phase in our energy transition on Long Island. This step is vital in making sure the lights turn on when a switch is flipped. LIPA projects the island will see an increase in the amount of battery storage from a current 10-megawatts to up to 750 megawatts to help meet the demands of the clean energy transition and reduce reliance on dirty peaker plants. However, local moratoriums based on fear are impeding this critical energy infrastructure. It is necessary to appropriately, equitably, and safely distribute these battery storage sites across the island to build the infrastructure of the future. NYLCV will:

- Engage and educate the public and stakeholders.
- Work with local and state partners to develop a standardized permitting process for battery storage.
- Remove barriers to responsible progress like local moratoriums.



A 20 MW battery energy storage located in Franklin County, NY. Moratoriums have constrained the development of this critical infrastructure on Long Island (NYPA)

TRANSPORTATION

There is no scenario where the state achieves its climate goals without significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. In recent years, while the purchase of electric vehicles across Long Island has substantially increased, one of the main barriers to purchasing an EV is range anxiety. To combat this issue and others, NYLCV will:

- Advocate for the passage of laws at the municipality and county levels to require 30% of new parking construction to be EV charging station ready. This will help lower the future cost of charging stations, as the vast majority of the cost comes from the excavating portion of the construction.
- Push for electric vehicle charging stations in all municipal garages and parking lots.
- Campaign for the passage of laws requiring municipalities to only purchase electric vehicles by 2030.

Public transportation needs to be clean, reliable, easy to use, and accessible. To make using public transportation a more attractive option than driving, NYLCV will:

- Support integrated multimodal transportation like walking, bicycling, and public transportation. Improve interconnectivity between buses, trains, and planes.
- Encourage complete street networks that connect residential areas to commercial areas, parks, and green spaces.
- Work to achieve the completion of the Long Island Greenway.
- Help formulate a plan and advocate for fully funding electrification of the Long Island Rail Road.

WATER QUALITY

From its estuary water to its sole source aquifer – which makes it especially vulnerable to water quality issues– water on Long Island is precious. Much of Long Island, in particular Suffolk County, uses old and degrading septic and cesspool wastewater

systems. These systems break frequently and pour dangerous pollution and nitrogen into both the aquifer and surrounding estuaries. Additionally, Brownfield and Superfund sites impacted by industrial pollution like the Grumman Plume, and long-term use of Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), better known as forever chemicals, add to the worrying ecological picture. Combined, these issues have led to devastating environmental and ecological effects, such as toxic blue-green algae blooms and fish kills, that impact the local bays Long Islanders love to enjoy. To combat these water quality issues, NYLCV will:

- Advocate for the passage of policies like: requiring homes that already have the option of connecting to sewer systems to do so; require testing and septic fixes during property transfer or system failure; and, increased funding and policies for the transition from septic systems to sewers with recharge and/or reclamation features.
- Promote the use of the Septic Improvement Program (SIP) by homeowners and support initiatives to expand SIP funding.
- Encourage the continued implementation of the Long Island Sound, Peconic, and South Shore Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMP) to restore and preserve the estuaries by incorporating CCMP recommendations into town and village codes.
- Encourage the speedy distribution of funds from the Suffolk County Water Quality Restoration Act.
- Advocate for funding to water suppliers for equipment to remove PFAS like 1,4-dioxane from the water system.
- Support the continued reauthorization of the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act.
- Promote and encourage support for water quality testing programs and reports like those from Save the Great South Bay and Save the Sound.
- Push local municipalities to implement natural buffers along the coast, including beaches and dunes, restored and protected wetlands, eel grass fields, oyster reefs, and other living shoreline approaches, while also opposing the hardening of shorelines.

- Help pass local resolutions and zoning codes to encourage the use of Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines, especially with Government-Owned and Government-Funded Projects.
- Support efforts to improve stormwater management in light of more frequent and severe rain events.
- Urge localities and the wider community to support the transfer of used oyster shells to curing sites, and improve the permitting process of curing sites. Oysters and clams work as a natural water filter, with some adult oysters being able to filter more than 50 gallons of water a day.
- Advocate for the protection of the sole source groundwater aquifer from salinization, which is especially prevalent in Nassau County.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

With the impending closure of the Brookhaven landfill in 2028 and construction material deposits ended, Long Island’s waste-management system is in need of revamping. To mitigate this issue and help put the island on a more sustainable path when it comes to waste management, NYLCV will:

- Advocate for budget allocations and policies from municipalities and county legislatures to expand regional recycling facilities, anaerobic digesters, compost sites, curbside collection of residential food waste, commercial organic waste recycling programs, and “save-as-you-throw” programs.
- Provide educational materials for backyard composting and other local organic recycling efforts, and link local composting with local agriculture.
- Support county or regional level solid waste management plans that do not overburden environmental justice communities.
- Pass County wide Skip the Stuff legislation. By making accessories like plastic utensils for takeout opt-in instead of opt-out, Skip the Stuff guarantees that all takeout and delivery orders only provide accessories that the customer needs, saves businesses money, and reduces waste and pollution.
- Encourage the speedy identification and remediation of soil contamination from pollution.

OPEN SPACE & FARMLAND PROTECTION

Long Island has many great community parks and environmental gems like the Pine Barrens, but open space has become harder to find, create, and protect with the extensive development on the island. It’s important that we protect the open spaces and farmland we already have, and expand where we can for future generations to enjoy. In that pursuit NYLCV will:

- Advocate for Plum Island to be preserved in perpetuity.
- Support expansion opportunities of the Pine Barrens such as preserving the remaining environmentally sensitive pine barrens parcels in the Core Preservation Area and Compatible Growth Area such as the NYSDEC Edgewood Oak Brush Plains Preserve in Commack/Deer Park. In total the Core Preservation Area and Compatible Growth Area parcels make up 3,800 acres of land across Long Island. Additionally we will work to protect areas threatened by the southern pine beetle.
- Advocate for an islandwide review of dams that serve as impediments to wildlife, most notably migratory fish.
- Encourage funding for farmland protection as farms are one of the least carbon-intensive forms of land use.
- Promote investment and protect parks and greenspaces like creating pocket parks and community gardens, with special attention to underserved communities in greatest need of parkland development.
- Encourage the establishment of more local buyback programs for property on the front lines of climate change.

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NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

NYLCV is the only nonpartisan, statewide environmental organization in New York that fights for clean water, clean air, renewable energy, and open space through political action.

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NYLCVEF educates, engages and empowers New Yorkers to be effective advocates for the environment.

