



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: Mark Levine

Office sought & district number: Manhattan Borough President

Campaign e-mail: info@votemarklevine.com

Campaign phone: (347) 688-8683

Website: <http://votemarklevine.com/>

Facebook page: Official page: <https://www.facebook.com/marklevinenyc>, Campaign page:

<https://www.facebook.com/TeamLevineNYC>

Twitter handle: Official account: @MarkLevineNYC, Campaign account: @TeamLevineNYC

Campaign manager's name and email: Ilana Maier, ilanammaier@gmail.com

Press Secretary's name and email: N/A

Scheduler's name and email: Ilana Maier, ilanammaier@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.

Addressing climate injustice and our environmental crisis has been a priority for me as a Council Member and will continue to be as Manhattan Borough President. Manhattan needs bold policies to rein in greenhouse gas emissions, build greater resiliency in neighborhoods across the borough, and create jobs in the green economy for communities most impacted by climate injustice. As a member of the City Council, I co-sponsored the landmark Climate Mobilization Act, mandating dramatic reductions in fossil fuel consumption by large buildings; secured a historic \$43 million investment in NYC parks; and helped create the Parks Department's Community Parks Initiative. I also sponsored legislation to study waste policies and ways to reduce single-use plastic, investigate solar-ready measures for commercial buildings, promote reusable beverage containers over single-use plastic at food service establishments, study the impact of e-commerce on congestion and promote resilient transit by investing in bike infrastructure and strengthening bus speeds through expanding Transit Signal Priority. As borough president, I'll continue this work and will be an active NYLCV ally in our efforts to cut carbon

emissions, expand green spaces throughout the borough, grow the green economy, accelerate the shift to renewable energy, and build greater resiliency in our communities.

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)

Transportation -- and private car use especially -- is a major contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in NYC, and we need to take bold action to address it. To do this, we must incentivize public transit, bike travel, and pedestrian travel through equitable infrastructure investment and transit funding. We must also disincentivize unnecessary private car use through smart policy and regulation.

As borough president, these efforts will include building upon the open streets program and expanding it across the borough; replicating the success of the 14th Street Busway on 34th Street and 181st street, among others; pushing DOT to invest further in transit priority signals along every bus corridor; investing in more protected bike lanes across the entire borough; supporting an equitable and effective rollout of the State congestion pricing plan; protecting access to public green space; pushing to invest in electric charging stations to ensure the state can meet our 2050 goals; and exploring ways to better pedestrianize street design.

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)

As former chair of the City Council's parks committee, I am passionate about public green space. I believe parks are essential infrastructure for this city--critical to our health, economy, environmental resilience, and more. Parks have never been more important to the life of this city than during the pandemic, and I believe that will support renewed investment in these precious assets. As a Council Member, I secured a historic \$43 million investment in New York City's parks and helped create the Parks Department's Community Parks Initiative, which led to over \$130 million in capital funds for small, neglected parks throughout the city. I introduced legislation to ensure that Parks complies with the standards set out in the Americans with Disabilities Act, and as borough president, I will continue to fight for more resources for our parks and will work to make them more accessible and welcoming to every New Yorker. Our parks are some of our greatest treasures, essential for making inclusive, diverse and healthy neighborhoods. I will do everything I can to protect and expand them.

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)

As a City Council member, I sponsored legislation that would require a comprehensive study of new waste policy initiatives and aim to reduce the sale, distribution, and use of single-use plastic items in the city. As borough president, I will leverage the legislative, budgetary and bully pulpit powers of the office to organize advocates, policy-makers and our neighbors to make the serious and aggressive changes needed to reach the City's Zero Waste goals. In partnership with the NYLCV, these efforts will include hosting public education events, trainings, and webinars out of my office; partnering with CBOs who oftentimes have stronger relationships in their communities than government; emphasizing communities of color and areas of the city that have borne the brunt of environmental redlining; organizing my colleagues in State and Local government to pass legislation and hold oversight hearings on key issues; reinstating and expanding Manhattan's free curbside compost and organic waste programs, and holding the City accountable to key progress markers so that we can enforce strategies to meet our goals.

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)

Climate change is the crisis of our time, and we can't wait another moment to aggressively work to lower emissions, create jobs in the green economy, and protect New Yorkers from the impacts of climate change. To do this, climate change and environmental justice must shape every decision we make, be it in ULURP, transportation, housing, sanitation or healthcare, and as borough president I'll bring a holistic lens to addressing these problems. These efforts will include:

1. Using the powers of the office in ULURP to demand renewable energy fuels our new buildings
2. Utilizing city-owned property to deploy renewable energy and battery storage technologies
3. Building union job opportunities in the green economy
4. Holding the City accountable to ambitious emissions standards for municipal buildings
5. Disincentivizing the use of personal cars and relying upon convenient and fast public transit
6. Lowering the thresholds that would trigger EIS reviews of development proposals
7. Hardening our infrastructure and waterfront to protect public housing and communities of color who too often bear the brunt of climate change impacts
8. Oppose any new fossil fuel infrastructure that would bring new natural gas into NYC

6. Transportation (p. 5)

Any effort to lower emissions must include a comprehensive and ambitious plan to improve mass transit and make our transit system more equitable and resilient. As a Council Member, I've long been a champion of public transportation and bike infrastructure and have worked on legislation to both rein in out of control FHV industry and address the role e-commerce plays in our city's congestion problems.

As borough president, I will continue to advocate for policy and infrastructure that encourages taking the bus and cycling, including replicating the success of the 14th Street busway, as well as pushing for more protected bike lanes and adequate enforcement of dedicated bike and bus lanes. I'll also work to build upon the lessons learned in the enormously successful Open Streets program, with particular focus on neighborhoods that do not have easy access

to open green space. These efforts must also address the enormous changes in freight and delivery that have been seen over the last 12 months. These changes are easy to overlook but play an essential role in conversations about cutting both congestion and emissions. As borough president, I'll push to implement green loading zones for cargo-bikes borough-wide and will work with City Hall, DOT, City Planning and the industry to find creative ways of unloading trucks off our streets and avenues.

7. Resiliency (p. 6)

While we fight to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, we cannot ignore the mounting threat that climate change already poses to NYC. That requires major investments to protect our city--especially waterfront areas--from extreme weather events.

As borough president, I will use the office's position in ULURP to prioritize hardening our infrastructure and protecting our waterfront in rezonings. This will be especially important in communities of color, communities that are often most vulnerable to sea-level rise and poor air quality. These efforts will include investing in natural buffers along the coast, as well as the construction and maintenance of affordable housing so that we can protect those who may be displaced by climate change. Ultimately, we will need a comprehensive citywide plan for long-term resiliency, and I'm ready to work to help organize my colleagues and partner with the NYLCV to make that happen.

8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

In addition to the actions outlined under "Common Sense Waste Management" above, I will take the following actions to reduce solid waste:

1. I will work with local council members to create community drop-off centers and ensure that people have equitable access to local areas where they can drop off their waste and participate in composting.
2. I will work with the City Council to develop a pilot program to incentivize large apartments and developments to centralize and manage waste and recycling management, thereby reducing trash left on the street and ensuring waste is properly disposed of.
3. I will advocate for city agencies to recycle and use materials from the city's waste stream when possible rather than purchase and use completely new materials. We cannot only expect residents to recycle and manage their waste efficiently; the city must set a good example for them.

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)

Our parks, waterfront and green spaces are more critical to the livability of this city than ever. As the Chair of the Committee on Parks and Recreation, I fought hard for--and won--major investments into both our anchor parks and small, often overlooked and underfunded, neighborhood parks. I also called attention to the unique needs of NYC's 10,000 acres of natural areas. As borough president, I will push for a doubling down on investments in our precious green space by advocating that a full 1% of the City operating budget be dedicated to parks (up from the current level of only about 0.5%)

10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

In 2004, New York City enacted a law which included a commitment to eliminate lead poisoning in children by 2010. The failure to achieve this goal is unacceptable. As chair of the City Council's health committee, I have worked to enact much more aggressive policies to end the scourge of lead poisoning among children in our city, especially those who live in NYCHA.

Among other measures, I sponsored legislation to require the Department of Parks and Recreation to test sources of potable water in parks and install filters in parks with high lead concentration. As borough president, I will continue to fight to address lead levels in our communities. We need greater cooperation and data sharing between agencies to ensure that any possible instances of lead poisoning are investigated as soon as possible, and we need to increase inspections and improve tenant notification in NYCHA housing when lead is found.

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

New York City summers are hot, making many New Yorkers, especially the elderly and the very young, vulnerable to heat related health concerns. Manhattan in particular is classified as a "heat island", with high density and many communities with inadequate green space. As borough president I'll work to expand heat mitigation measures such as expansion of green roofs. I will also fight to ensure that low-income families, including those in NYCHA, are provided with air conditioners. And I will work to strengthen and expand the city cooling center program, along the lines of the proposals put forward by WEACT.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

Vehicle and building emissions in NYC contribute to climate change, and cause air quality problems which disproportionately impact communities of color. As borough president, I will push hard for electrification of MTA buses and the entire fleet of City-owned and -operated vehicles. I will explore ways to reduce truck emissions through shifting deliveries to less congested times. I will support the transition from heating oils to cleaner heat sources such as electric heat pumps or renewable biofuels.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

New York City's combined sewer overflow system continues to lead to contamination of our waterways during periods of intense rain. As borough president, I will fight to mitigate against this through an expanded pace of installation of green infrastructure such as bioswales and rain gardens. In particular, I will work to ensure DoT uses pervious pavement wherever possible.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us how fragile our city's food support systems were, and how vulnerable New Yorkers are to food insecurity.

1. As borough president, I will support the expansion of both community and commercial urban agriculture in New York City, including evaluation of possible amendments to the zoning code to clearly define permissible urban agriculture practices in each zoning district.

2. I will fight for the funding and development of urban community gardens and work with the city to improve the effectiveness of programs like NYCEDC's FRESH incentives so that fresh foods are available to all New Yorkers. A key part of ensuring that all residents have access to healthy food is the expansion of programs such as SNAP, which I will strongly support in the legislature.

3. I will work to implement and expand educational programs on healthy eating through NYC public schools so that students value sustainability and healthy eating as they grow up.