



30 Broad Street – 30th Floor
New York, NY 10004
212-361-6350
politics@nylcv.org / www.nylcv.org

2021 Environmental Questionnaire for Westchester 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 Westchester 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, May 21, 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: MaryJane Shimsky

Office sought (& district number if applicable): Westchester Board of Legislators District 12

Campaign e-mail: mjshimsky@verizon.net

Campaign phone: 914 478 7192

Website: maryjaneshimsky.com

Facebook page: MaryJane Shimsky

Twitter handle: N/A

Campaign manager's name and email: N/A

Press Secretary's name and email: N/A

Scheduler's name and email: Gaby Bordwin gaby@bordwin.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

I've been very much concerned about protecting our environment since childhood. As a County Legislator, I have advocated for our County and our local governments to do more to protect our air and water quality, and our land resources; and to battle climate change. Some of the issues I have worked on in my time as Legislator include: increased use of hybrid and/or electric vehicles, including buses, trucks and heavy equipment, and more widespread availability of EV charging stations; investments in clean energy, energy efficiency retrofitting, and climate resiliency. For years, I have been sounding the alarm about the deteriorating condition of our sewers and the need to repair/redesign them. I have supported the expansion of sewer lines in our watershed (yes, we drink what leaks out of septic systems...).

Since July of 2011, I have chaired the Saw Mill River Stormwater Advisory Board (SWAB); I also co-founded the Bronx River Advisory Board (BRAB) and have served as BOL liaison to the Countywide Stormwater Advisory Board (C-SWAB).

Stormwater management is closely tied with conservation issues, as overdevelopment and the wrong kind of development takes away the land's natural ability to absorb stormwater. These issues are becoming more important as climate change is visiting more severe storms on our region.

Creating less waste, and disposing of the waste we do create more responsibly, is also vital to a more sustainable planet. I allied with local advocates in Greenburgh to support a State law allowing supermarkets to donate their leftover foods. And I have been a part of the conversation on food waste recycling.

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 Westchester 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)

After years of relative inactivity, the County is doing more to convert and reduce our energy usage.

We're moving on EV and charging stations -- we need to keep vigilant as hybrid/EV technology moves to trucks and heavy equipment, and make sure that we purchase them. We do seem to be doing more with energy efficiency in building improvements, which is great; but retrofitting, especially with low-lying fruit such as LEDs, is not yet complete and it should be. Also, I think we're in process with a NYSERDA audit, and I'd be interested to know if there's anything we're missing in terms of energy efficiency.

The biggest WWTP, in Yonkers, has two anaerobic digesters to help power the plant -- I think we'll be moving in this direction at other plants in the coming years (Peekskill may be next).

I'd love to have us be in the forefront on battery storage. I'd like to learn more about the Stretch Energy Code and retrofitting incentives, and see what is practicable to implement on the County level. The County buys most of its electricity from NYPA, and we're told that it's cheaper, and it comes from hydroelectric generation -- this doesn't preclude us from producing our own energy and we do have a solar roof law in place. Again, it wouldn't hurt to kick the tires and see if there's anything we should be doing differently.

3. Transportation (p.5)

We are probably doing better at the hybrid/EV conversions. Thank goodness, we are reviewing our Complete Streets policy and will hopefully make improvements in the next year. At the airport, it is my understanding that we are moving toward electric vehicles. One project that I find intriguing is something done at Albany airport -- they installed an anaerobic digester and process their deicing fluid onsite, using the energy to heat buildings. I think it would be great to find as many ways as possible to keep waste onsite and convert it to onsite use. Solar panels, consistent with FAA regulations, could also be a good use of the surrounding land.

4. Resiliency (p. 6)

YES!!!!!!!!!!!!

As a longtime infrastructure advocate and chair of the infrastructure/public works committees before I became Majority Leader, I understand that there has to be a really close nexus between environmental goals and infrastructure investment. All of these items are required to keep Westchester from drowning in coming decades (I explain to people that Westchester is one big funnel sending water from the Catskills to the Atlantic Ocean, which makes us particularly vulnerable to increased flooding resulting from climate change).

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

We are progressing on residential food waste recycling and are awaiting implementation of the County study. We've banned styrofoam, and I'm definitely in favor of moving toward targeting more takeout waste in favor of more environmentally responsible treatment. Recycling glass for roads, yard waste for gardening uses, etc. are very important to continuing to reduce our waste streams. I would be interested in knowing what the State regs are for road and construction uses.

Protecting People and Natural Resources

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

6. Clean Land, Air, and Water (p. 9)

SWAB and BRAB have called attention to stormwater issues, and the integrity of our rivers and streams. Permeable surfaces are being used, but can be used more -- again, working with State agencies (more prominently DOT) to come up with specs that local governments can be confident in requiring for their projects would be very helpful. We are investing hundreds of millions in our WWTs, and perhaps most importantly moving toward a sewer district consolidation plan that will help keep our sewers in better repair. I think that creative water reuse would be very helpful, but we are only in the very beginning stages of that journey. I'm all on board with anti-idling laws (though public education is really going to be needed -- I am stunned at how many people run their SUVs while in the supermarket!), native plants, best landscaping practices and IPM.

7. Sustainable Development (p. 10)

Yes to it all! We've already touched on energy and walkability a bit; adaptive reuse of buildings is more important than adaptive reuse of anything else, because buildings take up more resources. How we organize our communities is very important -- in Westchester, keeping in mind that train stations are important foci for development is very important as well (and the Hudson line is of course a waterfront feature).

8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.10 – 11)

Preserving open space is critical for stormwater management, clean air, reduced stress and increased opportunity for recreation (which can be either passive or active, as appropriate). I've been working with the Village of Dobbs Ferry and local advocates to turn surplus DOT property near the Lawrence St. exit of the Saw Mill River Parkway into a park for passive recreation.

9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

Local food tastes better, is better for you, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Let's keep adding farmers markets, make it easy to use SNAP etc. at them; and teach a lot more about healthful eating in schools. The County could use its parks for farmers markets in areas that don't have their own; we can act as a clearinghouse for information and expertise to our schools.



