NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS
2019 NYC COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL Scorecard
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Last year was a landmark year for the environment in New York City.

As the most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change makes plain, we are in a climate crisis—and New York must lead the fight against climate change at this time when the federal government is stepping back from international commitments and rolling back common sense programs, like clean car standards. In 2019, the City took bold action by adopting new climate legislation: bills were enacted to reduce emissions from buildings, completely reimagine our commercial waste system, and improve our streets to promote safety and sustainability—all policies that we included in our previous NYC Policy Agendas and all critical steps in the fight against climate change.

Our primary tool for holding Council Members accountable for supporting the priorities included in these agendas is our annual New York City Council Environmental Scorecard. Using our policy agenda as a guide—and in consultation with our partners from environmental, public health, conservation and transportation groups—we identify priority bills that have passed and those we believe have a chance of becoming law for inclusion in our scorecard. We then score each Council Member based on their support of these bills.

As our 2019 NYC Scorecard shows, clean transportation remains one of our biggest priorities and it’s clear that the City Council made it a priority as well. We scored a whopping five bills that reduce emissions from the transportation sector—the largest contributor to climate change in our state and nation. Among the bills is one that supports electrification of school buses. But electrification will not be enough. That’s why we scored bills that give people more mobility options, including e-bikes and scooters, and improve bus service and the streetscape to prioritize pedestrians and bike paths so New Yorkers can more easily choose sustainable modes of transportation.

For example, the City Council passed landmark legislation to develop a master plan for streets that will encourage low-emission transportation, improve mobility, reduce dependency on cars, decrease pollution, improve air quality, and combat climate change. We will work with the Administration and our partners to ensure that this policy is implemented in a timely and equitable manner.
One already-enacted program that complements this new law is the “busway” on 14th Street in Manhattan. We spent years advocating for this because we knew that it could serve as a model that leads to quicker travel times, improved ridership, and fewer cars on the road citywide. Now, as we prepare for the launch of congestion pricing, we need more busways like it on major thoroughfares in every borough and other creative models to provide transportation alternatives.

In New York City, buildings are the top source of greenhouse gas emissions. That’s why the scorecard includes the nation-leading legislation that established building emissions caps. Intro 1253-C, now Local Law 97 of 2019, will ensure that certain major polluters in the residential and commercial building sectors do their part to fight climate change. This policy was a longtime priority for NYLCV since the single largest step the City can take to achieve the climate goals set out in OneNYC is to drastically reduce emissions from buildings. We thank the legislation’s sponsor, Council Member Costa Constantinides, for his leadership and steadfast commitment to passing the bill.

After years of negotiation, the City Council also enacted legislation to create a commercial waste zone system that will reduce emissions from garbage collection, decrease traffic congestion and improve safety for workers and pedestrians. This historic reform will also incentivize waste reduction, cleaner fleets, investments in organics processing, and lead to more green jobs. Congratulations to the Transform Don’t Trash Coalition and Council Member Antonio Reynoso for this huge accomplishment!

Thanks to the advocacy of our Play Fair for Parks campaign, Speaker Corey Johnson and the City Council made parks and natural areas a priority during budget season last year by securing an additional $44 million for NYC Parks and greenspaces—the largest increase in funding for parks in over two decades. This funding would not have been secured without our Play Fair founding partners New Yorkers for Parks and District Council 37 and the entire Play Fair coalition, which will continue to call for bigger investments in greenspaces in 2020 and beyond.

2019 was an incredible year, but we all know there is more work to do. In 2020, we will double down on efforts to expand organic waste collection, clean up our school buses, reduce plastic waste, protect our tree canopy and other green spaces, and continue to make progress on eliminating childhood lead poisoning.

This year will be big for our political system with a major election that could shift the balance of power in Washington. No matter what happens nationally, it is more important than ever for local governments to remain committed to the environment and serve as role models for other cities to follow. Climate change knows no boundaries and as a coastal city, we know all too well that we must act to make our community more resilient. New York City has already begun doing so, and we look forward to working with the Administration and Council to continue this progress in 2020!

Julie Tighe
PRESIDENT, NYLCV
BUILDINGS EMISSIONS CAPS
INTRO 1253-C (CONSTANTINIDES)
This law establishes the Office of Building Energy and Emissions Performance and sets greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) limits for certain buildings over 25,000 square feet in NYC. Currently, buildings make up the lion’s share of GHG emissions in the City, at over 70% of total emissions. The legislation’s goal is to ensure NYC meets its target of a 40% reduction in GHGs by 2030 and 80% by 2050, based on a 2005 baseline. Building owners will be required to meet strict building emissions limits or face penalties. Intro 1253-C was introduced on November 28, 2018 and heard by the Committee on Environmental Protection on December 4, 2018. The bill passed on April 18, 2019 by a vote of 45-2.
and mass transit for individuals with reduced mobility, hearing, or visual impairment. Among other things, the legislation requires that within the plan’s first two years, the City will add one million square feet of pedestrian space, and over the course of five years, add 250 miles of protected bike lanes and 150 miles of protected bus lanes. Intro 1557-A also requires DOT to conduct a public education campaign and post updates to the plan. With fewer cars on the road, pollution will decrease and air quality will improve, but in order to encourage New Yorkers to get out of their cars in favor of more sustainable modes of transportation, we have to make those options much more attractive. That’s why the Streets Master Plan is critical to NYC’s environment. Intro 1557-A was introduced on May 29, 2019 and heard by the Committee on Transportation on June 12, 2019. The bill passed on October 30, 2019 by a vote of 37-9.

COMMERCIAL WASTE ZONES
INTRO 1574-A (REYNOSO)
This law will transform the way NYC handles commercial waste by establishing commercial waste zones. The city will be divided into 20 geographic zones with up to three commercial waste carters operating in each zone. Under Intro 1574-A, the Department of Sanitation will designate the zones and carters will submit proposals as part of a formal bidding process to provide waste collection services to businesses in specific zones. Carters will have to follow strict and much needed environmental, safety, and labor standards in order to be selected. The commercial waste zone system is estimated to reduce emissions from garbage collection by as much as two-thirds, decrease traffic congestion and reduce miles traveled by commercial garbage trucks by 50%, making our streets safer and more pedestrian-friendly. The legislation is the culmination of years of input by environmental groups, labor, industry, the City Council, and DSNY. Intro 1574-A was introduced on May 29, 2019 and heard by the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management on June 27, 2019. The bill passed on October 30, 2019 by a vote of 34-14.

COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION
INTRO 140-A (LEVIN)
This law requires the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability to conduct a feasibility study on implementing a community choice aggregation (CCA) program in New York City. CCA is a program allowing municipalities to purchase power
for residents and businesses in bulk, making clean energy more cost-competitive. It is an opt-out program, which means customers who do not wish to participate can withdraw from the program. CCA would aid the transition from an energy system mostly operated by burning fossil fuels to one that utilizes cleaner, renewable energy. If the feasibility study recommends CCA, the Office would develop and make publicly available online a plan for implementation by December 31, 2021. Intro 140-A was introduced on January 31, 2018 and heard by the Committee on Environmental Protection on June 24, 2019. The bill passed on September 25, 2019 by a vote of 45-0.

SINGLE-USE PAPER BAG FEE
INTRO 1527 (LANDER)
This law opts the City in to the State Single-use Bag Law that goes into effect on March 1, 2020. The State Law bans most plastic bags, while this local law will require certain retail vendors to charge a fee of five cents for each paper bag provided to a customer. It would exempt residents who use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children as full or partial payment from paying the bag fee. Intro 1527 was a pre-considered bill heard by the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management on April 16, 2019 and formally introduced on April 18, 2019. The bill passed on April 18, 2019 by a vote of 38-9.

RENEWABLE RIKERS - WASTEWATER TREATMENT FEASIBILITY STUDY
INTRO 1591 (CONSTANTINIDES)
This bill would require the Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a study to determine whether a new wastewater treatment facility can be constructed on Rikers Island. New York City has a unique opportunity to transform Rikers Island into a place for the public good. Relocating the wastewater treatment plants away from environmental justice communities and onto the island could provide a chance to combat the historic environmental burden that many of these neighborhoods have borne for decades, and Intro
1591 would allow the City to determine if this move would be economically and environmentally feasible. Intro 1591 was introduced on June 13, 2019 and referred to the Committee on Environmental Protection, and heard by the Committee on Environmental Protection on January 27, 2020.

**RENEWABLE RIKERS - RENEWABLE ENERGY STUDY**
INTRO 1593 (CONSTANTINIDES)
Intro 1593 directs the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability to study the feasibility of installing different types of renewable energy and battery storage on Rikers Island. New York City has a unique opportunity to transform Rikers Island into a place for the public good. Building renewable energy and battery storage on Rikers can combat climate change, especially given there is very limited land available for siting clean energy within city limits, while also creating a hub for green jobs and clean energy. Intro 1593 was introduced on June 13, 2019 and referred to the Committee on Environmental Protection, and heard by the Committee on Environmental Protection on January 27, 2020.

**DIESEL SCHOOL BUS PHASE OUT**
INTRO 455 (DROMM)*
This bill would require all diesel school buses subject to New York City school bus contracts to be retired after they reach 10 years past the manufacturing date and be replaced by either diesel buses that meet the latest EPA standards, Compressed Natural Gas, hybrid, gasoline-powered, or fully electric models. The bill further requires that after September 2040, all school buses must be replaced with zero emission vehicles when they reach 10 years past the manufacturing date. Intro 455 was introduced on February 14, 2018 and heard by the Committee on Environmental Protection on December 17, 2018.

**PLASTIC STRAW BAN**
INTRO 936 (ROSENTHAL)
This bill would ban food service establishments from providing plastic straws and beverage stirrers, except those needed for medical reasons. This bill was formerly sponsored by Council Member Espinal, and was transferred to Council Member Rosenthal after he resigned from the City Council in January 2020. Intro 936 was introduced on May 23, 2018 and heard by the Committee on Consumer Affairs and Business Licensing on June 21, 2018.

**COMPREHENSIVE RESILIENCY PLAN**
INTRO 1620 (CONSTANTINIDES)
This bill would require the Mayor’s Office of Recovery and Resiliency or other agency the Mayor designates to develop a comprehensive five borough plan to protect the entire shoreline of New York City from the impacts of climate change. Intro 1620 was introduced on June 26, 2019 and heard by the Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts and Committee on Environmental Protection on October 29, 2019.

**ELECTRIC BICYCLES**
INTRO 1264 (CABRERA)
This bill would remove prohibitions against the operation of certain electric bicycles incapable of exceeding 20 miles per hour. The bill would also reduce fines for operating motorized bicycles prohibited by local law, provide that only motorized bicycles operated in a way that...
endangers safety or property are subject to impoundment, and clarify that operators of electric bicycles are subject to the laws applicable to all bicycle operators. Intro 1264 was introduced on November 28, 2018 and heard by the Committee on Transportation on January 23, 2019.

**ELECTRIC SCOOTER PILOT PROGRAM**

INTRO 1266 (CABRERA)*

Intro 1266 would require the Department of Transportation (DOT) to establish a pilot program for shared electric scooters. Neighborhoods underserved by transit and existing bike share programs or affected by the L-train tunnel reconstruction will be given priority in determining geographic boundaries of the program. The bill also prohibits the operation of shared electric scooters without prior approval from DOT. This bill is part of a legislative package and must pass with Intro 1250 (Cabrera), which legalizes shared e-scooters, in order for a pilot program to proceed. With congestion pricing coming online, it is more critical than ever to provide New Yorkers sustainable alternatives before this change goes into effect. Intro 1266 was introduced on November 28, 2018 and heard by the Committee on Transportation on January 23, 2019.

Note: Intros 1264 and 1266 were formerly sponsored by Council Member Espinal, and were transferred to Council Member Cabrera after he resigned from the City Council in January 2020.

**FARMERS MARKETS AND HEALTH BUCKS PUBLIC AWARENESS**

INTRO 1650 (ADAMS)

This bill would require the Human Resources Administration to provide information about the Health Bucks program and farmers markets to all individuals who receive or apply to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP). Health Bucks is a successful program that promotes the purchase of fresh, locally grown produce. For every $5.00 spent at NYC farmers markets using SNAP benefits, you can receive an additional $2.00 in Health Bucks. Expanding outreach about this program can help bring more fresh, local produce into the homes of low to moderate income New Yorkers. Intro 1650 was introduced on August 14, 2019 and heard by the Committees on Economic Development, Education, and General Welfare on September 18, 2019.

**EXPANDED LEAD POISONING INVESTIGATIONS**

INTRO 864 (SPEAKER JOHNSON)*

This bill would require the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), when responding to a report of a lead poisoned child, to inspect, in addition to the dwelling, all other child-occupied dwellings in the building. The bill would also require testing of water and bare soil areas of the building. DOHMH must also investigate daycare facilities, preschools and schools that were attended by a person with an elevated blood level, and parks, playgrounds or other areas with bare soil that the person with elevated blood level visits. Intro 864 was introduced on May 9, 2018 and heard by the Committees on Health, Housing and Buildings, and Environmental Protection on September 27, 2018.

*Denotes a previous scorecard bill
A Note to NYLCV Members

In 2019, you used your voice to tell your legislators to fight climate change, conserve natural resources, and protect public health. The environmental wins we were able to achieve in 2019 were because of support from members like you. When we act together, we can get a lot done.

An important part of our work is holding our elected officials accountable. Many City Council members—including NYLCV endorsed candidates—will be running for re-election in 2021, or pursuing other elected positions in Federal, State or City government. Use this scorecard as a resource in 2020 and future elections when deciding who you want to represent your community and the environment. This scorecard tells you whether your local representatives listened to you and your neighbors by upholding their responsibility to promote sound policies that protect the environment. Here are three ways you can continue to help us in this endeavor:

**TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS YOU KNOW THEIR SCORE:** It only takes a minute to say thanks—or no thanks—to your legislators.

**SPREAD THE WORD:** Share this scorecard with your friends and family so they know the score of their elected officials.

**DONATE:** We could not accomplish our mission without the generous support of our members, please make a donation so that we can continue fighting climate change, conserving land and water, and protecting public health.

*Visit NYLCV.org/nycscorecard for more.*
Key Results

Fighting climate change often requires our leaders to make bold—and difficult—decisions to change behavior and create a city that is more sustainable. That fact is apparent in the 2019 scores. Both the citywide average score and several borough averages are down in 2019 compared to 2018. We attribute this decline to the fact that the environmental bills taken up by City Council last year were more transformative than in years past, and therefore seen as tougher votes to many in the Council.

There was some notable movement at the borough level. Manhattan was a standout performer for the 2019 Scorecard, with an average score increasing to 97. This is the highest borough average we’ve ever recorded on our NYC Scorecard. Over half of the Manhattan delegation has a perfect score, and no member from Manhattan scored below a 90. We are thrilled to watch their score rise, and hope other boroughs will follow their lead in 2020.

**PERFECT SCORES**
- Adrienne Adams
- Diana Ayala
- Justin Brannan
- Margaret Chin
- Costa Constantinides
- Rafael Espinal
- Mathieu Eugene
- Mark Levine
- Carlos Menchaca
- Antonio Reynoso
- Donovan Richards
- Carlina Rivera
- Ydanis Rodriguez
- Ritchie Torres
- Jimmy Van Bramer

**LOW SCORES**
- Joseph Borelli - 29
- Chaim Deutsch - 42
- Ruben Diaz Sr. - 14
- Robert Holden - 64
- Andy King - 27
- Steven Matteo - 7
- I. Daneek Miller - 50
- Kalman Yeger - 50
Average Score by Borough

Manhattan was a standout performer for the 2019 Scorecard, with an average score increasing to 97. This is the highest borough average we’ve ever recorded on our NYC Scorecard.

BRONX
69

MANHATTAN
97

QUEENS
83

BROOKLYN
88

STATEN ISLAND
42

CITYWIDE AVERAGE
81
Key City Council Leadership

The Speaker has significant influence over which legislation moves through City Council, so while NYLCV doesn’t score the Speaker, there are a few key metrics that provide a glimpse into his environmental leadership.

Last year only three of the 13 scorecard bills had passed at the time of publication. This year, five of our scorecard bills have been enacted, and we expect that number to grow in 2020.

The types of environmental legislation that the Council considers also provides insight into the Speaker’s environmental credentials. In 2019, several scorecard bills were both politically and technically challenging bills and required an immense amount of political capital and leadership to bring to a vote. Buildings Emission Caps, Commercial Waste Zones, Paper Bag Fee, and Streets Master Plan were all bills that some considered controversial. Under the leadership of Speaker Johnson and the bill sponsors, each of them passed in 2019. And the Speaker ensured two packages of bills intended to protect our children and families from lead poisoning were adopted—including legislation he sponsored.

The Citywide average score also reflects on the Speaker. And while the 2019 average score is down compared to 2018, we recognize that the bills scored were tougher than in years passed. The Speaker can and should push to vote for bold climate action, and we expect him to continue to do so in 2020 and beyond.

Finally, the Speaker is able to express environmental priorities via the budget process. New York City’s over $92 billion budget must be negotiated with Mayor de Blasio and his administration, but the City Council can lay out their own priorities and fight for their inclusion. Last year Speaker Johnson did just that by championing the Play Fair for Parks Campaign.

Play Fair is a multi-year campaign for more funding for NYC Parks led by New Yorkers for Parks, NYLCV, and District Council 37. With the help of Speaker Johnson and our coalition of 200+ parks groups, we were able to secure a $44 million increase to the Parks budget, the largest increase in several decades.

All of the above shows that Speaker Johnson is committed to climate action. While the scorecard bills that passed in 2019 have the potential to move the needle on emissions reductions citywide, more needs to be done to achieve our climate goals. This is especially true in the waste sector, an area we will need sustained leadership from Speaker Johnson to get the job done.
Key Committee Chairs

RESILIENCY
Justin Brannan
100

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Costa Constantinides
100

CONSUMER AFFAIRS
Rafael Espinal
100

PARKS
Peter Koo
93

HEALTH
Mark Levine
100

SANITATION & SOLID WASTE
Antonio Reynoso
100

TRANSPORTATION
Ydanis Rodriguez
100
## Council Scores

### KEY
- **= Pro-Environment Action
- ** = Anti-Environment Action
- ** = Excused
- ** = Abstain, Anti-Environment Action
- ** = Not Applicable

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**Borough Average Score 97**

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**Borough Average Score 69**

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* Council Member King was suspended from City Council from October 28, 2019-November 28, 2019 and was unable to participate in a few votes on scorecard bills.
## Council Scores

**KEY**

- **✓** = Pro-Environment Action
- **✗** = Anti-Environment Action
- **E** = Excused
- **A** = Abstain, Anti-Environment Action
- **N/A** = Not Applicable

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**Council Member Louis was sworn into office in June 2019, replacing now Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. For that reason, she was not able to participate in a few votes on scorecard bills. Since she's been in office less than a year, we are electing to show the votes she was present for, but are not scoring her for 2019.**

2019 NYC COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL SCORECARD
Methodology

NYLCV regularly convenes a “Green Group” coalition of New York City’s leading environmental, public health, transportation, parks and environmental justice organizations to discuss important issues and inform our legislative priorities. Using this input, NYLCV selected the legislation in this Scorecard.

Council Members earn points by casting pro-environment votes or by co-sponsoring pro-environment bills. Negative votes count against the final score. Votes missed due to excused absences are not factored into the score, while abstentions count as an anti-environmental vote. Bills that passed during 2019 were graded on whether or not each legislator took the pro-environment vote. Bills that did not reach a vote during 2019 were graded on co-sponsorship. Council Members were given a grace period until January 15, 2020 to co-sponsor bills.

As Speaker, Corey Johnson is not scored. However, the citywide average, which the Speaker has substantial influence over, is a reflection of his commitment to the environment.
WE ONLY HAVE ONE PLANET
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.