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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](mailto:politics@nylcv.org)
- ☒ Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg ([jklainberg@nylcv.org](mailto: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: **Pierina A. Sanchez**

Office sought & district number: **Council District 14**

Campaign e-mail: **pierina@pierinasanchez.nyc**

Campaign phone: **917-476-6018**

Website: **<https://www.pierinasanchez.nyc/>**

Facebook page: **@PierinaSanchezNYC**

Twitter handle: **@PiSanchezNYC**

Campaign manager's name and email: **Andrew Chang, 917 232 5246, [andrew@pierinasanchez.nyc](mailto:andrew@pierinasanchez.nyc)**

Press Secretary's name and email: **N/A, [media@pierinasanchez.nyc](mailto:media@pierinasanchez.nyc)**

Scheduler's name and email: **N/A, [scheduling@pierinasanchez.nyc](mailto:scheduling@pierinasanchez.nyc)**

## 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.

- While working as New York Director at Regional Plan Association, I co-produced equity focused climate recommendations as a co-author of the Fourth Regional Plan: <http://fourthplan.org/> and regularly joined allies including NYLCV in advocating for a pro-environment agenda: <http://fourthplan.org/>.
- I also collaborated with the city's leading transportation and environmental advocates, including NYLCV, on developing a joint-transportation and equity agenda for NYC, which included many pro-environment policies such as congestion pricing:  
[https://www.straphangers.org/reports/2017/ACFrOgC5rm7en2Okb0e3BxVrJeQGpeVBtLNCfJl...zDV7nTGejHTTP\\_7XYg-Bu6eN\\_Pmv42br1JCIA=.pdf](https://www.straphangers.org/reports/2017/ACFrOgC5rm7en2Okb0e3BxVrJeQGpeVBtLNCfJl...zDV7nTGejHTTP_7XYg-Bu6eN_Pmv42br1JCIA=.pdf)
- I was a member of NYLCV's "Green Group" for two years, representing RPA in that coalition.

- I also led a project with a city, village and town in the Hudson Valley to implement best practices in sustainability at different levels of government, and published a smart growth toolkit <https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/rpa-org/pdfs/Mid-Hudson-Sustainability-and-Smart-Growth-Toolkit.pdf>),
- While working at City Hall, I internally supported policies from our leading environmental justice advocates including NYC-EJA, WE ACT, Climate Works for All, The Point, and Nos Quedamos, such as reforming commercial waste zones and advancing green building legislation.

## 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)

**When I was a kid, I would cross and play near the Cross Bronx Expressway to visit family and play in my favorite parks. Today, many of my family members suffer from asthma and respiratory illnesses. This is why I have centered environmental justice in urban planning activism at RPA and the Mayor’s Office, as well as in my work in our local community boards and neighborhood coalitions.**

**As a Council Member, I will continue the work I began as a sustainable development advocate at RPA working with key stakeholders to aid in a transition away from heavy duty vehicles that run on diesel. They contribute to the climate crisis and their exhaust sickens our communities. We must implement policies that require this transition for the City's own heavy duty fleet by 2030, and ensure there is available charging infrastructure in the City to ease this transition for both private and public fleets.**

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)

**I am a proud member of Morris Bean Garden, our nearby community garden in D14. These spaces are not only places of respite, but also places of healing in our hard hit community.**

**Communities need neighborhood amenities including gathering spaces and open space, especially those with large numbers of residents living in overcrowded conditions. As Council Member, I will continue to push implementation of the Equitable Parks plan, which focuses investment on public parks in communities like mine - densely populated, growing neighborhoods with higher-than-average concentrations of poverty.**

**I will also actively support the continuation of a strong history of community gardens in the Bronx that started in the 1980s as resistance to the systematic disinvestment of City government and the environmental injustice enacted by NYC parks under Robert Moses. I will fight for our thriving Bronx community gardens, as well as for our public parks and green spaces to remain community- and publicly-owned.**

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)

**I support a citywide residential organics program to keep the waste from rotting landfills, and investment in a public outreach effort that matches the scale of the transformation needed in waste diversion.**

**That the City eliminated their organics program as a result of the economic downturn is a setback in the efforts to meet our climate goals. While we have no organics program as of**

**FY21, we can still focus on getting the other ⅔ of the waste stream right, first and foremost.**

**○ I will:**

- 1. Focus on reduction and reuse at the community level.**
- 2. Support for waste reduction focused CBOs and green businesses like micro-hauling to support zero waste.**
- 3. Public education on proper recycling by DSNY**
- 4. Fight to pass intro 1942-2020, CORE Act, then introduce another bill to establish a citywide residential organics program.**

## 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)

- I will fight for an aggressive green new deal that closes all peaker plants, more rapidly moves us off of fossil fuels in our buildings via investments in energy efficiency retrofits for buildings in EJ communities**
- We need an all-out assault on the climate crisis, especially because we are only a short time away from losing a third of our energy supply with the closing of Indian Point. Without quick and decisive action by local leaders, Indian Point could be replaced by more natural gas. As a council member, I will advocate for maximizing our renewable energy potential, while also fighting to make sure clean energy can efficiently get into and be safely stored in the city, particularly from off-shore wind.**
- I will not support the building of any new fossil fuel infrastructure and push for a transition away from existing fossil fuel power plants. This includes fighting to close dirty peaker plants that pollute our air.**

### 6. Transportation (p. 5)

**Improved and increased transit use is critical to a greener future where congestion and emissions are reduced. I also believe streets should be designed for people and transit over cars, and so complete, safe street design is also a priority. With respect to policy within City control, I would advocate for:**

- More and better bus service is central, especially service where busses have dedicated lanes, signal priority, external fare collection, and other known interventions that can improve the quality of the experience**

- A more inclusive, accessible transit network, one that is an avenue of opportunity for people with disabilities
- A network of protected bike lanes, and investment in more bike parking infrastructure
- Traffic calming measures on our streets, including arterial corridors like Grand Concourse, to make them safer for pedestrians.
- Electric transit and school buses
- full implementation of congestion pricing, including exploring a scheme that allows for increased pricing during high-traffic and/or air quality alert days.

## 7. Resiliency (p. 6)

I support Council Member Brannan's Five-Borough Resiliency Bill. Hurricane Sandy brought devastation to communities throughout the five boroughs, yet emphasis in the years since has focused heavily on protecting lower Manhattan. This is unacceptable. The New York City Panel on Climate Change shared dire warnings that the coast in parts of Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx are most at risk of flooding. An estimated 500,000 New Yorkers live near the City's 300 miles of shoreline and are constantly at risk of climbing sea levels, which are on pace to rise one foot by 2050. Thus, we need to build a comprehensive citywide plan that has that scientific approach at its core. The plan should prioritize communities that are most vulnerable, not those with the most monied interest.

Putting the policy in place is just the first step though. We must also work with state, federal, and regional leaders to create a funding mechanism to realize this plan. Protecting our City from the current and future impacts of climate change is no small feat and will require considerable investment. We cannot go it alone. I will leverage my experience and relationships as a leader in regional planning to ensure NYC is partnering with cities and towns across the east coast.

## 8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

I support a citywide residential organics program to keep the waste from rotting landfills, and investment in a public outreach effort that matches the scale of the transformation needed in waste diversion.

The fact that the City eliminated their organics program as a result of the economic downturn is a setback to meeting climate goals. While we have no organics program as of FY21, we can still focus on getting the other ⅔ of the waste stream right, first and foremost.

○ I will:

1. Focus on reduction and reuse at the community level.
2. Support for waste reduction focused CBOs and green businesses like micro-

- hauling to support zero waste.
3. Public education on proper recycling by DSNY
  4. Fight to pass intro 1942-2020, CORE Act, then introduce another bill to establish a citywide residential organics program.

### 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)

**I am a proud member of Morris Bean Garden, our nearby community garden in D14. These spaces are not only places of respite, but also places of healing in our hard hit community.**

**Communities need neighborhood amenities including gathering spaces and open space, especially those with large numbers of residents living in overcrowded conditions. As Council Member, I will continue to push implementation of the Equitable Parks plan, which focuses investment on public parks in communities like mine - densely populated, growing neighborhoods with higher-than-average concentrations of poverty.**

**I will also actively support the continuation of a strong history of community gardens in the Bronx that started in the 1980s as resistance to the systematic disinvestment of City government and the environmental injustice enacted by NYC parks under Robert Moses. I will fight for our thriving Bronx community gardens, as well as for our public parks and green spaces to remain community- and publicly-owned.**

#### 10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

**As council member, I will push the City to follow through on every commitment made in the 2019 LeadFreeNYC plan.**

- **Lead can be found in a wide range of areas in the environment, spreading detection, protection, and enforcement spread across many city agencies. We should empanel an interagency task force to review every lead policy at DOHMH, DOB, Parks, HPD, DOE, and DEP to ensure there is adequate coordination between them not just when**

a child is found to have an elevated blood lead level, but proactively to find lead at the source before a child's health is endangered.

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

- This issue is a matter of life and death in my district. The Department of Health labels my entire district as “highest risk” to heat related illness and death in their heat vulnerability index. (source)
- We have many homes without air conditioning and low tree cover.
- We need investment in building upgrades, including expansion of the City's Cool Neighborhood program, and investment in targeted tree plantings and green roofs to help bring surface temperatures down.
- Most critical piece is helping those most vulnerable, New Yorkers living in poverty, especially those who are elderly, in the highest heat vulnerable neighborhoods get access to energy efficient air conditioning.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

Air pollution levels are higher than the citywide avg in our community, exposure to which overtime can lead to or worsen serious cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses such as asthma and COPD.

My proposals include working with our long-time environmental justice leaders in the Bronx to address poor air quality caused by the many highways criss-crossing our communities and dirty fuel burning in our buildings, toxic pollutants flowing in our rivers, and the peaker plants, WasteWater Treatment Plants, and waste facilities occupying our waterfront.

The quality of our indoor environment also plays a big role in our health. According to the City's Health Department, only 18% of renter-occupied homes in district 14 are well-maintained by landlords – free from heating breakdowns, cracks, holes, peeling paint, pests, and other defects. Peeling paint, mold, roaches, and other pest issues can actually lead to serious health impacts. And mold and pests are asthma triggers that pollute our indoor air and negatively impact our lungs.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

I am supportive of NYLCV's Clean Water priorities as outlined in the 2021 NYC Policy Agenda. I am particularly interested in your push for “NYC's Department of



**Environmental Protection (DEP) to implement a formal, transparent reporting process on the progress of the Long Term Control Plans for the city's waterways" because the cleanliness of the Harlem River is important to my district.**

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

**In my community, there are 20 bodegas for every supermarket in the district, meaning access to healthy affordable food is harder to come by. It's difficult for Bronxites to make healthy everyday decisions about their diet if the options aren't there. This fresh food scarcity is then reflected in our health outcomes; our community has higher than average rates of diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. I will fight to bring more fresh food options to District 14 as Council Member.**