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2021 Environmental Questionnaire for Long Island 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 Long Island 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, April 30, 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: Rob Calarco

Office sought (& district number if applicable): Suffolk County Legislator LD 7

Campaign e-mail: Robcalarco@gmail.com

Campaign phone: 631-523-1586

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Press Secretary's name and email: Jacqueline Routh Jaqueline.h.routh@gmail.com

Scheduler's name and email: Patrick Derenze patrickderenze@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.

I have been a strong proponent of advancing and voting for initiatives in Suffolk that ensure we protect our environment. This ranges from supporting the preservation of open space, especially along our estuaries, to advancing the expansion of sewers, replacing septic systems with new advanced treatments systems and much more. Locally in my district we recently completed a \$4 million project to remove invasive species from Canaan Lake and are supplying I grant to remove bulk heading and create a living shoreline at Shore Front Park in Patchogue.

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 Long Island 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)

I am in full support of the NYLCV energy proposal and think there is great potential moving forward. I am supportive of wind energy, including landing the lines in Smith Point which is in my district. Wind energy is both clean renewable energy but also new jobs. I am also a proponent of both the Community Choice Aggregation program as well as expanding opportunities for community solar projects. I believe the federal infrastructure bill is a great opportunity for LIPA and PSEG to obtain the funds needed to upgrade the grid to make more commercial solar as laid out in the Nature Conservancy’s Solar Road Map possible. The Suffolk Planning Commission created a model code that most LI towns adopted for commercial solar placements and I think that offers a great option to create a streamlined code for residential solar.

3. Transportation (p. 6)

Suffolk can make some great strides in this area despite some challenges. This includes the completion of bus rapid transit infrastructure for the Route 110 and Nicolls Road corridors to create better north south transportation options. Last year I sponsored a resolution directing the

Department of Public Works to do a feasibility study for installation of electric vehicle charging stations. I think we now have to move forward with these plans. This is even more important as we look to move our fleet further away from gas and even hybrid vehicles and into fully electric models. In addition I created the complete streets policy and recurring funding stream in Suffolk, allowing the evolution of county roads to be accommodating of all users.

4. Resiliency (p. 6 - 7)

Suffolk has expanded our standards so future infrastructure be it roads, bridges, culverts, etc. are built to standards that take into consideration increasing storm severity and sea level rise. We are in the process of retaining experts to develop a Coastal Resiliency Program.

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

Suffolk has passed a myriad of laws to ban the use of many single use plastics as possible, including straws, bags and packaging, etc. I also believe the proposed anaerobic digester can be a game changer for our region.

Protecting People and Natural Resources

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

6. Clean Water (p. 8 - 9)

Our water is the most precious resource we have in Suffolk County and we need to do all we can to protect it. We have created a robust grant program to underwrite the cost of replacing septic and cess pools with new IA systems that greatly reduce nitrogen pollution. We have also advanced sewer project that will sewer vulnerable coastal communities in Babylon, Patchogue, Oakdale, Shirley and Mastic. In addition, we adopted a sub watersheds plan that lays out how to continue advancing the goal of protecting our water.

7. Sustainable Development (p. 9)

I am a firm believer in growing in our downtowns where we can create walkable communities to reduce reliance on cars and better facilitate mass transit. As stated above we created a complete streets policy to make roadways conducive for all users and this year passed a law to provide more protections for bicyclists on our roads. I also helped fund a study that will lead to more focused growth in downtown East Patchogue that builds off downtown Patchogue Village. Also critical to our region will be working with the towns to help find creative ways to rezone emptying shopping centers into new mixed use development.

8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.11)

Suffolk has had a robust park and open space preservation program that has allowed us to preserve thousands of acres of open space. We were also very proactive in finding ways to open our parks during the pandemic to provide residents with safe recreation opportunities. I am also excited that we are ready to break ground on the creation of Roe Park in Blue Point. The property was a former dry cleaner and car repair shop among other uses. The county remediated the contaminated site and are now going to restore the stream that currently passes through in a culvert and install playground equipment and a basketball court to create a pocket park. Additionally with the completion of the Canaan Lake Invasive Species project, we have created new access points increasing the ability for residents to get to the lakeshore, launch a canoe or kayak and fish.

9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

Suffolk has one of the most vibrant and diverse agriculture industries in NYS. We pride ourselves on preserving more farmland through the acquisition of development rights than any other county in NY. I recently visited a variety of farms ranging from horticulture, vegetables and aquaculture. We recently renewed and expanded our shellfish aquaculture lease program offering more space for oyster farmers in the Peconic Bay. This not only helps the oyster farmers but improves the health of the bay.