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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
- 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: Sandy Nurse

Office sought & district number: City Council District 37

Campaign e-mail: info@sandyforcouncil.com

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Scheduler's name and email: Alexis Salcedo, alexis@sandyforcouncil.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.

As the founder and former Executive Director of BK ROT, I partnered with a team of individuals and organizations working to transform our food and waste systems and positively improve the health of our community and ecosystem.

In 2013, I founded BK ROT, a youth composting service and green jobs project. We introduced microhauling, the hauling of less than 2,000 lbs per trip of organic waste without the use of emissions vehicles. BK ROT was a closed loop project with a mission to keep human, financial, and ecological resources within the community, and to transform our food and waste systems. It was a response to the lack of meaningful jobs for youth, high rates of lead in our soils, a lack of composting options in the community, and to change the face of the city's sustainability movement. We employed young people at \$15 per hour at a time when the minimum wage was \$8.

I am most proud of the work I did to successfully codify microhauling as a new sector within the waste industry into city legislation via Intro 1574 the Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) bill. The goal

was to push forth a vision of stronger laws for the diversion of food waste from landfills and reducing emissions generated through waste collection. I played a lead role in taking a lofty idea of teenagers and young adults moving waste on bikes and built an alliance to strengthen our advocacy position. I worked to bring our alliance into larger coalitions through building trust. After a three year push, we were finally recognized by the City as an emerging industry that has been successfully given the regulatory space to grow in the CWZ bill. The microhauling sector we have created is now being formalized as the NYC Microhauling and Processing Trade Association, which launches this month.

We collaborated to build a replicable model of a new kind of waste system, one that uses food waste as the foundation for a healthy urban ecosystem, that offers those harmed by the exploitation and extraction of our environment an opportunity to be experts in a regenerative economy, and that uplifts the people and places responsible for managing waste.

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 inform 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)

Clean public transportation is a big need here in the district. As our most recent Census data showed: 66% of households in the district do not have access to a car. This means that many residents in my district are not contributing greatly from private vehicles to GHGs, and therefore should have priority in investments in upgraded public transit infrastructure. We need to ensure more investments in protected bike lanes, a strong arterial network for connecting to other bike lanes in adjacent neighborhoods. We need to invest more in MTA buses and bus stations, we need more Select Bus Service routes for faster commuting. Broadway Junction needs a serious overhaul to improve ADA accessibility standards, ensure the escalators and elevators are working properly 24/7. Many of our trains are above ground, which can be great for storm resiliency, but terrible for people waiting for trains who are elderly, young, or differently abled. I would like to work with local state lawmakers to make the MTA a priority.

Most of NYC's greenhouse emissions come from inefficient buildings with poor and outdated insulation, outdated windows, and poor building envelopes that lead to immense energy required for heating and cooling. We need to work with private homeowners and multi-family dwellings to support them in taking advantage of the many weatherization programs that exist from state agencies in addition to working to retrofit the millions of commercial buildings in NYC.

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)

NYC Parks are true gems of this city. They support positive mental health of many New Yorkers and our larger ecosystems. I am committed to preserving, improving, and expanding our parks and natural areas. I am particularly committed to protecting and resourcing our wild places such as Jamaica Bay.

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 the founder and former Executive Director of BK ROT, I partnered with an incredible team of individuals and organizations working to transform our food and waste systems and positively improve the health of our community and ecosystem. We were the first e-trike powered microhauler in NYC, and it led to the launching of a dozen other food waste and composting microhauling operations. We successfully got our new fossil fuel free microhauling operation to be codified into city legislation through the Commercial Waste Zones bill. To do this we had to negotiate with the Sanitation Committee of the City Council and fight against large corporate trash haulers, all while selling the idea that organic waste can be efficiently managed by grassroots organizations and social enterprises.

I am committed and have done significant advocacy work to demand the city invests in organic waste recycling facilities within the city's limits. I also believe we must continue to increase incentives for source separating waste, increasing quick access to recycling for e-waste, and working to disincentivize single use plastic.

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 am committed to championing, initiating, and supporting efforts to transition New York away from fossil fuels and natural gas to renewable energy. My work over the last ten years has focused on building models to show concrete ways in which certain sectors in NYC can begin to transition away from fossil fuels, while creating new accessible, well paying good jobs. I see myself fighting fracked gas pipelines, demanding peak plants get shut down, supporting the plan for a Renewable Rikers, more investments in bike infrastructure, championing bigger investments in public transit, instituting and expanding congestion tolls for cars in certain parts of the city, and a list of many more initiatives.

District 37 is in need of economic justice, which I plan to champion through the Climate Works For All Post-Covid Recovery Plan. This plan includes investments in our industrial and manufacturing zones for sustainably industries to take root, and in workforce development for green union jobs. As a community that has been deeply underserved and underfunded, our community should be a priority community for receiving benefits of investments in a new, transformative, and sustainable economy in NYC.

6. Transportation (p. 5)

Related to public transportation, I plan to work strongly with the Rider's Alliance, the transportation committees of CB 4, 5, and 16 to develop a district plan that takes into account the Bushwick Community Plan, and the planned development of the East NY Rezoning Plan to ensure a comprehensive strategy is developed. I will work with the MTA and the Transit Workers Union to ensure we are implementing recommended efficiencies, safety measures, and improvements to our public transit system.

7. Resiliency (p. 6)

My district is in an elevated position and does not face the immediate threats of extreme coastal flooding. However, as eastern coastal zones become increasingly unstable for human habitation there will be migration pressure of whole communities needing to relocate to higher ground. Therefore it is critical we resource plans for resiliency planning related to our waterfront communities and shoring up our utility and public transit systems to ensure they can withstand disruptions and impacts due to extreme climate events.

Our community also struggles with the chronic impacts of environmental injustices such as very poor air quality and high rates of air pollution. Some parts of the district have extremely high rates of particulate matter due to the large number of idling waste trucks, nearly 60 per hour, and a large school bus depot.

Solutions for resiliency are more than waterfronts and emergency planning. Resiliency planning hits many intersecting issues that if not met will continue to leave our communities deeply vulnerable to rapid shocks due to the climate crisis. These include the creation of housing affordable to the local community's income levels, housing for those with disabilities and mental health issues, deeper investments in workforce development programs that train a new generation of workers and re-skilling workers who can build and maintain the resiliency infrastructure we need, investments in early education on the science of climate change, investments in year round local food production to increase food security, and investing in high quality public transportation such as above ground trains, bus only lanes, and protected bike lanes.

8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

Organic waste recycling and waste management is also critical to the North Brooklyn area as many private waste companies have yards here in the district and adjacent in District 34, and in Glendale, Queens. We need to work with the Transform Don't Trash coalition to create accountability as the CWZ rolls out and RFP's are put out and fulfilled. I plan to work with this coalition to ensure workers are being protected, as outlined in the CWZ. We also need to work with DSNY to identify organizations who are ready and equipped to manage large scale organic waste recycling facilities that can sit within the district's IBZ zone and also that can be located in District 42 along the waterfront and near the wastewater treatment facility. Public land processes take a long time and need partners who have viable operation plans. We need to take inventory of who is ready to hold these operations and start building a plan post-June, within the coalition to land these facilities.

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 agree with these positions.

10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

I agree with these positions. Lead poisoning in NYCHA and in private homes must continue to be addressed with priority going to NYCHA.

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

I agree with these positions.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

In addition to the mentioned policy initiatives in the report, the electricity used by a NYC electricity fleet needs to be sourced from renewable energy sources.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

I agree with these policy initiatives.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

The NYC Council can begin to improve NYC's food system by looking at public procurement processes to source from the thousands of small organic and/or pesticide free farms. This could impact large food sourcing operations like DOE, DHS, and many publicly funded hospitals as a start. I fully plan to support the creation of a East NY Food Hub and a Central Brooklyn Food Hub that can increase local year round hydroponic/aquaponic food production, and to have space for various food operations to process, prepare, and distribute. I intend to work with the Department of Buildings to help ease restrictions for rooftop farms and indoor food production.