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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](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.
- General election endorsements will be made by the NYLCV State Board on July 29, 2021.

**CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION**

Candidate name: Sarah S. Anker

Office sought (& district number if applicable): Suffolk County Legislator for district 6

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Campaign phone: 631-875-9848

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### 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 a Suffolk County Legislator, I am proud of my record of supporting a pro-environment agenda. I have worked to advance many forms of environmental legislation that protect our sole source aquifer, improve our waterways, protect the Long Island Sound, and preserve environmentally sensitive properties as open space. I have supported Suffolk County's legislation to ban microbeads, voted to approve Suffolk County's Septic Improvement Program which will provide grant and loan assistance to homeowners to upgrade to advanced wastewater treatment systems to reduce nitrogen, and co-sponsored the ban on plastics and styrofoam. I have spearheaded many resolutions to preserve environmentally sensitive parcels in Suffolk County and have support over 2,000 acres of open space and farmland preservation acquisitions including: 24-acre Country View Estates property in Middle Island, 85-acre Little Portion Friary property in Mt. Sinai, 5.4-acre parcel which had been slated for development and is now an addition to the 64.4-acre Cordwood Landing County Park and I am currently pursuing a 20 acre parcel in Middle Island in partnership with the Town of Brookhaven and Longwood Youth Sports Association to create a community park.

After joining the Mt. Sinai Civic Association 25 years ago, I became involved in preserving and protecting our environment by advocating against development on the Chandler Estate, which became a county park. I founded Community Health and Environment Coalition, 20 years ago to address the issue of the high incidence of cancer and diseases in my area. I feel our environment directly affects our health. I have advocated for protection of our ground water, air and reduction of chemical use, by speaking at public hearings on all government levels, holding informational meetings, working with environmental groups and galvanizing community support.

Prior to being a County Legislator, I facilitated the creation of Brookhaven Town's Office of Energy and Sustainability. As the Director of the Department I oversaw the implementation of the Green Homes and the Go Solar Programs, which were funded by the Federal Government's ECCBG - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (\$4.5 million), created to encourage the use of green energy. In addition to running the programs, I supervised and moved forward conservation efforts at the Town of Brookhaven by coordinating energy efficiency efforts in town owned buildings to reduce energy consumption.

As a County Legislator and member of Suffolk County's EPA Committee (Environment, Planning and Agriculture) and former member of the Soil and Water Conservation District Committee, I have supported land preservation and legislation to protect our environment, as well as legislation to protect our agricultural community. I have sponsored Resolution 29-2012 to exempt county sales tax on commercial installation, to support the solar industry and encourage the use of clean energy. An article regarding this piece of legislation was featured on the NYLCV website. I have also co-sponsored Resolution 747-2011 to ban the use of coal tar, and Resolution 1091-2012 to eliminate sales slip receipts with chemicals that are known carcinogens. In addition I support higher fines and penalties, working with law enforcement, to address illegal dumping.

I support Smart Growth, centralizing development to allow increased open space. This will provide better oversight of groundwater protection. I was awarded Person of the Year for Environment by the Times Beacon Record local newspaper and received recognition by environmental groups and government officials for environmental advocacy.

I have facilitated the North Shore Coastal Erosion Task Force, which was created through legislation I sponsored to address the severe erosion on Long Island's north shore. I am also working with Cornell Cooperative Extension and Long Island Native Plant Initiative with the Education Agricultural Sustainability Initiative (EASI), which is legislation I sponsored to address the decline in pollinator species particularly the monarch butterfly and the bee population.

Finally, after 50 years since its inception I am proud to facilitate the Rails to Trails Recreational Path, a 10-mile bike and walking path from Mt. Sinai to Wading river, which is slated to be completed in the fall of this year.

## 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)

Prior to being a County Legislator, I facilitated the creation of Brookhaven Town's Office of Energy and Sustainability. I was designated the Director of the Department and oversaw the implementation of the Green Homes and the Go Solar Programs, which were funded by the Federal Government's ECCBG - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (\$4.5 million), created to encourage the use of green energy. In addition to running the programs, I supervised and moved forward conservation efforts at the Town of Brookhaven by coordinating energy efficiency efforts in town owned buildings to reduce energy consumption.

I support legislation adopted in 2006 creating LEED standards which requires the Department of Public Works to adhere to LEED Building Rating System 2.2 principles for new construction projects or renovation projects with a cost of \$1,000,000 or more, and for the planning of new construction and renovation projects "built to suit" for long term lease by the County. In addition, in 2015 Suffolk County adopted legislation authorizing the county to be added as a municipal member to a New York State sustainable energy loan program. This program allows Suffolk County to provide loans to commercial and non-profit property owners for the installation of renewable energy systems and energy efficient measures.

As a County Legislator, I have sponsored Resolution 29-2012 to exempt county sales tax for commercial solar installation projects, which compliments the New York State sales tax exemption. As a member of the County's EPA and an environmental advocate, I will continue to move forward with green energy policies and I will continue to support residential renewable energy initiatives. I have worked with the Real Estate Industry to promote the advantage of buying or selling a home that is energy efficient and has renewable energy features. I have also worked with PSEG and LIPA to create a rebate program for all-electric customers and to educate homeowners, particularly senior citizens, who live in the all-electric communities of Leisure Village and Leisure Knoll, about energy saving measures and available rebate programs.

I support NYLCV Policy agenda including: supporting offshore wind development that creates green jobs on Long Island, expanding LIPA's renewable energy and efficiency programs, purchasing energy from renewable sources and increase clean energy purchasing power through programs like Community Choice Aggregation and supporting Long Island-based renewable industries providing solar, wind, and energy storage, adopting green building standards for new residential and commercial construction, removing barriers in local laws and codes to streamline the permit process for installation of renewable energy sources for homeowners and business owners, reducing light pollution, Investing in wastewater treatment upgrades to process organic waste into renewable energy, promoting policies to invest in battery storage and other emerging green technologies and developing programs that ensure clean energy, microgrids, and efficiency programs are equitably delivered to low-income populations and tenants of affordable housing.

3. Transportation (p. 6)

Public transportation is vital to our local economy and I support to increase funding to LIRR and regional transit to provide additional routes and services. I also support the MTA Capital Plan that provides increase capacity and reliability. The county has replaced many diesel vehicles with hybrid and electric cars that I have supported. The county has installed charging stations at county facilities for county fleet. I continue to advocate for better accessibility for public transportation, as a member of Suffolk's Transportation Working Group. I support additional funding for our buses and I am working with the bus companies to increase ridership through "flex/demand ridership" transportation.

In addition, I spearheaded the North Shore Rail Trail (a 10 mile walking/biking path) construction that will be completed in the fall of this year. The path will provide a viable option to the reliance on cars along the north shore in my legislative district.

4. Resiliency (p. 6 - 7)

My district has a severe problem with erosion. After witnessing first hand houses falling of the cliffs due to erosion, I started the North Shore Erosion Task Force to help homeowners find ways to address this problem. I partnered with the local civics, Suffolk County DPW and the Water and Soil Conservation District to create an informational packet with resources such as plantings that will reduce erosion and storm water runoff information. I wrote letters to advocate for the CEHA (Costal Erosion Hazard Area) maps but the maps still have not been released by the state. These maps are vital in understanding the future high water mark that will be necessary for local town permitting.

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

I believe that protecting our sole source aquifer is Suffolk County's top priority. That is why I voted to approve the Septic Improvement Program as part of the Reclaim Our Water Initiative, and why I have joined my colleagues on the Legislature in working to preserve open space and farmland development rights. I have also been working with local communities in my district to invest in several wastewater treatment plant upgrades within Suffolk County Sewer Districts.

I support working with all levels of government to encourage recycling, as well as exporting waste through rail rather than by truck. I'm currently researching recycling programs that will provide the county residence better access to recycling and I supported the limited use of plastic straws and packaging.

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)

In addition to supporting the Nitrogen Action Plan and Reclaim Our Water, I support storm water runoff initiatives; advocating against the dredging dumping in the Long Island Sound; investment in wastewater treatment upgrades; mapping of salt water intrusion; support of rain gardens; support pesticide reduction; providing funding for clam and oyster seeding projects in our harbors to help reduce water pollution; and addressing toxic chemicals in our groundwater by supporting testing and increased fines for illegal polluters. As member of the Environment, Planning and Agriculture, I am a strong supporter of open space and farmland preservation as well as smart growth development. I also support eliminating the chemical application of Methoprene for vector control.

I am currently writing a children's book on ocean pollution.

## 7. Sustainable Development (p. 9)

I fully support downtown destinations and Transit-Oriented Developments. In addition, I support county legislation to provide reduced sewer connection fees to developers who create additional affordable units. This legislation will encourage developers to design smart growth-style developments and will allow for a greater density while providing much-needed affordable housing.

As the first Energy Director for the Town of Brookhaven, I worked to create incentives for residents and contractors building new homes to invest in Energy Star-rated appliances and I also ran the Green Homes and Go Solar programs which provided grant funding through NYSERDA to homeowners to upgrade their homes to be more energy efficient and install solar panels.

As a Suffolk County Legislator, I have supported energy saving programs throughout the county including the installation of solar carports and LED lighting in county buildings. These upgrades are provided for each year in our capital budget. In addition, we have invested in hybrid and electric vehicles for our Department of Public Works fleets and are currently working on mapping a blue ways trail utilizing grant funding. In addition I worked with LIPA and PSEG to create a rebate program for residents with all electric energy, focusing on many seniors in my district who pay up to \$1000 per month because they do not have access to oil, gas or renewable energy alternatives. Through legislation I initiated the concept of a PYAC, Planned Young Adult Community (similar to a PRC, Planned Retirement Community), which provides affordable housing for young adults located on or near college campuses.

Since entering public office I have work to move the North Shore Rail Trail aka, Rails to Trails Recreation Path, forward. The 10-mile, \$10 million project languished for decades and through my relationship with the stakeholders including elected officials, energy corporations and agencies, and most importantly the community, I was able to put it back on track and now we are moving full steam

ahead! The path, due to open in the fall, will not only provide a safe place to recreate but will bring a boost to our local economy.

To help prevent loss of native biodiversity and growth of invasive species to protect natural landscapes I partnered with the local community to integrate the use of native plants in an educational native pollinator garden at the local a community park.

#### 8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.11)

As a member of the EPA committee, I support the county acquisition of land for parks, open space and farmland development. I have approved over 2000 acres of land acquisitions and I am currently working to acquire property in Middle Island for a community park. I was part of a local group of residents who advocated creating the local Heritage Park in Mt. Sinai. I am using the design as a template for the Longwood Community Park, partnering with the Town of Brookhaven and LYSA, Longwood Youth Sports Assoc. In addition, I continue to facilitate the North Shore Rail Trail, a 10 mile linear park that will provide a safe route for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Open space acquisition is vital to protect our ground water and to support for our native plant, animal, and insect species.

I have sponsored and co-sponsored many parks resolutions including: protecting our parks and open space through the "Park Watch" programs; installing cameras in our parks to stop illegal dumping; sponsoring Suffolk County's "Parks Appreciation Week" that provided free admission during the spring break week –April 20 through April 28, to encourage the use of county parks (parallels with National Parks Week); and supporting the acquisition of open space and farmland development.

In collaboration with the Long Island Native Plant Initiative (LINPI), I sponsored legislation to initiate the Educational Agriculture Support Initiative (EASI) that involved creating a pilot native pollinator garden at the Heritage Park in Mt Sinai. This initiative aims to educate residents on the importance of native plants, providing for local pollinators, and reducing the influence of invasive species. With the decimation of the Monarch butterfly and the low population of bees, which help our farm pollinate crops and sustain our farm community, I will continue to support native plants and pollinator initiatives that promote education and awareness.

I'm currently working with Stony Brook University's SOMAS, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences and Seagrant to create a Marine Debris Pollution Awareness Program.

#### 9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

As a former member of both FFA (Future Farmers of America) and the County's Soil and Water Conservation District, I have advocated and worked with farmers to support our farms and access to local produce. I support Cornell Extension's partnership with the county to help promote local

events supporting our local farms and teaching our residents on the importance of farming locally. In addition, I support local farmer's markets and I sponsor a Senior Health Fair which has on site local information about farmer's markets and the importance of eating healthy.

Farming plays a critical role in our local economy and I support the many farms in the county and look forward to acquiring additional farmland development rights.