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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: Steve Behar

Office sought & district number: City Council/23rd District

Campaign e-mail: daven@stevebehar.com

Campaign phone: 860-248-1801

Website: www.stevebehar.com

Facebook page: N/A

Twitter handle: <https://twitter.com/SABehar>

Campaign manager's name and email: Daven Patel/daven@stevebehar.com

Press Secretary's name and email: N/A

Scheduler's name and email: N/A

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 spent decades advocating for the environment. I was for the Green New Deal before it was called the Green New Deal. In my personal and my professional life as Counsel in the New York State Senate and the New York City Council I have promoted environmentally friendly legislation including local law 97 of 2018.

I have worked with groups like the Coastal Preservation Network in College Point, NY to clean New York's waterways and plant pollution absorbing and oxygen emitting vegetation. I have followed the progress of various organizations who have worked to clean New York Harbor and supported those efforts.

I have long been a proponent of clean renewable energy including solar, wind, and geothermal. I have also been a proponent, and have pushed legislation to, retrofit buildings in New York City to be more efficient. Finally, I have also been a proponent of electric vehicles and would like to introduce legislation to speed the conversion to EVs by building the necessary infrastructure to finally end use of internal combustion engines.



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)

I have long been a strong supporter of low emissions or zero emissions vehicles including those used in mass transit. I have long been a supporter of EVs and hope to push the building of infrastructure to end the use of the internal combustion engines.

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)

My District contains many green spaces and large parks including Alley Pond Park, Cunningham Park, and the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway Greenway. In my position as Counsel to Council Member Barry Grodenchik I have worked to, and succeeded, in repaving Vanderbilt Motor Parkway Greenway, funding Alley Pond and Cunningham Park, and increasing the New York City Park's budget by 43 million dollars.

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 am committed to the City's zero waste goal. As a member of the Council I will strongly support recycling and expanding the city's composting 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)

As Counsel to Council Member Barry Grodenchik I supported local law 97 of 2018 and looked forward to the implementation of this historic legislation. As a member of the New York City Council I will support upgrading the City's waste water treatment plants and the building of an EV recharging infrastructure.

6. Transportation (p. 5)

I have supported bus rapid transit for a decade and a half. District 23 is a transit desert. District 23 is the only District in the New York City Council that you cannot take a train from. We have no subway stations or LIRR Stations in our District. We must improve our buses including bus rapid transit. Finally, I support a shared electric scooter program to assist my constituents in returning home in the “last mile.”

7. Resiliency (p. 6)

I was Counsel to State Senator James Sanders Jr. in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. I was in the Rockaways the morning after the storm. I have seen the destruction that takes place from the storms that are happening much more frequently. New York City is a city surrounded by water. We must do everything we can to protect New York City from future storms.

8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

The City must promote mandatory recycling, composting, and the implementation of emission free garbage trucks.

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)

As Counsel to Council Member Barry Grodenchik I helped create Play Fair. I met with stakeholders of our parks and waterfronts and helped create the partnership that increased the city parks budget by 43 million dollars.

10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

We need to do everything we can to ensure that our drinking water is safe. Lead in our water is extremely dangerous to our children. Lead hinders the development of children. Elevated lead levels in children is completely unacceptable.

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

As climate change leads to hotter summers New York City must do everything it can to protect New Yorkers from excessive heat. We must also expand New York City's green spaces and forest cover to provide a safe place for New Yorkers to escape the heat.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

New York City must transition its fleet of vehicles to zero emissions vehicles. The MTA must transition to a fully electric fleet. We must convert the heating of our buildings to clean renewable energy.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

DEP must focus on a long term plan to ensure that New York City's water remains safe and clean. We must prevent runoff into the waterways of New York City. This can be done by increasing the use of bioswales, rain gardens, and increasing green spaces.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

My District is home to the Queens Farm Museum. The Queens Farm dates back to 1697. It is the largest remaining tract of farmland in NYC. It is 47 acres and is one of the longest continuously farmed sites in New York State. Council Member Grodenchik has been a major supporter and funder of the Farm Museum and I plan to continue that support.