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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
- 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: Steven D. Rhoads

Office sought (& district number if applicable): Nassau County Legislator – District 19

Campaign e-mail: srhoads25@yahoo.com

Campaign phone: (516) 679-0153

Website: steverhoads.com

Facebook page: Re-Elect Legislator Steve Rhoads

Twitter handle: @SteveRhoadsLD19 H

Campaign manager's name and email: Hon. Fred Parola – frenor2196@aol.com

Press Secretary's name and email:

Scheduler's name and email:

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.

Served on Nassau County's Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee from 2006 until my election. The Committee advised the County on the protection of open space and parks as well as on land purchases and projects associated with the Environmental Bond Act.

Have advocated and voted for the Bay Park Diversion Project which directly impacts my district and is the most significant environmental project in Nassau County in a generation. Working with New York State, I spearheaded a robust public information campaign in my district to counter misinformation about claimed dangers and hosted numerous public meetings to assist in galvanizing public opinion. This \$600 million project will stop the over-nitrification of the Western Bays as a result of the Bay Park Sewer Treatment Plant by diverting treated effluent to Cedar Creek Plant's ocean outfall. The release of nitrogen rich effluent into Reynolds Channel has decimated marine life in the Western Bays and has weakened natural storm surge protections which are vital to Long Island's south shore. Studies have



suggested that the stopping the release of effluent into the Western Bays will allow natural processes to restore life to these waters in as little as ten years.

Have supported groundwater protection studies through the USGS to test for saltwater intrusion and other contaminants in our sole-source aquifer.

Passed a ban on the commercial use of Styrofoam containers within Nassau County

Provided additional funding to support the NICE bus system and travelled to Albany to lobby the State Legislature for both additional funding for public transportation in Nassau County, but also for sustainable funding mechanisms such as an Uber-Lyft surcharge which would be dedicated to public transportation.

Established the Commercial Property Sustainable Energy Loan Program to provide financing to local businesses to fund renewable energy systems and energy conserving measures at their businesses.

Sponsored the acquisition of property adjoining the County's existing Wantagh Railroad Museum to protect that land from development and to preserve same as open space. This was the first utilization of the County's Open Space Fund to purchase property on Nassau's south shore.

Lobbied to block attempts by the City of New York to reopen wells which would have further overburden our sole-source aquifer.

Sponsored annual volunteer clean-ups of Mill Pond, Meroke and Tackapausha Preserves and have worked with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to sponsor an annual water chestnut pull in Mill Pond Preserve to assist in controlling the spread of this invasive species.

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)

Passed legislation to amend Nassau County's capital planning process to include the strategic planning of infrastructure projects to include the incorporation of environmental infrastructure such as the use of solar power.

Approved the creation of a 1.5 megawatt solar farm at the southern end of the Cedar Creek Sewer Treatment Plant;

Sponsored the introduction of a fleet of electric vehicles for official County use so as to reduce the County's carbon footprint.

3. Transportation (p. 6)

Adopted the Nassau County Complete Streets initiative to consider all users of roadways, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit in planning and design of County roadways;

Approved grant funding for transit-oriented development projects;

Restored \$4.5 million in funding to provide for operation of the NICE bus system in 2021 without cuts in service;

Supported the conversion of NICE bus to a fleet running on compressed natural gas so as to minimize the fleet's carbon footprint;

Lobbied New York State for additional funding for NICE bus and for a Lyft and Uber surcharge to go towards Nassau County public transportation;

Approved capital funding and contracts for the creation of pedestrian and bicycle pathways in various areas of Nassau County.



4. Resiliency (p. 6 - 7)

As previously stated, I have approved the contracts, funding and legislation necessary for the Bay Park Conveyance Project which will assist in restoring tidal wetlands; provide vital storm resiliency protections and support restoration of marine life in the Western Bays.

I have also fought for extension in New York Rising storm resiliency deadlines so as to permit more homeowners impacted by Superstorm Sandy to participate in optional elevation and other programs, and have lobbied for various infrastructure projects designed to promote storm resiliency.

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

As stated, I supported the ban of Styrofoam containers in Nassau County and created a special revenue fund for the clean up of County properties;

Work with the Town of Hempstead to promote the responsible disposal of Hazardous Household Wastes

Sponsored numerous preserve and park clean-ups and work with the State Department of Environmental Conservation to sponsor annual invasive species pulls at local preserves.

Working with OSPAC, I assisted in the creation of a Master Plan for Nassau County active and passive parks as well as preserves which details permissible uses and activities to promote the preservation of parks and open spaces.

Have voted for tens of millions of dollars in funding for capital improvements at the Cedar Creek and Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plants and voted to fund the conversion of the Long Beach treatment plant into a pumping station

Voted to fund a Septic Tank Grant program to promote the replacement of residential septic systems in areas of Nassau County which are not yet sewerred.



6. Clean Water (p. 8 - 9)

Lobbied New York State and the Federal government for funding for the construction of remedial systems and the cleanup of groundwater contamination, and approved easements for their construction, including an easement to the U.S. Navy for the cleanup of groundwater in Bethpage from the Grumman plume.

Passed legislation to require annual public reporting on Nassau County's groundwater and public water supply including assessments on the sustainability of Nassau's groundwater; identified contaminants and treatment systems

Lobbied for the State's takeover of New York American Water

Authorized the creation of and funding for the Long Island Commission on Aquifer Protection with the goal of identifying threats to Long Island's sole source aquifer and to advance a regional approach to its protection. I also approved and funded a contract with the USGS to analyze water quality for saltwater intrusion and other contaminants.

Joined my colleagues in all levels of government in successfully preventing New York City's attempt to utilize Queens wells to access Long Island drinking water which would have placed additional demands on our already overburdened aquifer.

Worked with Operation Splash to sponsor an anti-pollution campaign and poster contest with area high schools;

7. Sustainable Development (p. 9)

Voted for capital project for the planting/re-planting of trees along County roadways and in parks and County facilities;

Voted to have Nassau County adopt the New York State Climate Smart Communities Pledge;

Voted to establish the Commercial Property Sustainable Energy Loan Program which, as previously described, provides financing to local businesses to fund renewable energy systems and conservation systems at their business.



8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.11)

Worked with OSPAC to administer projects and the acquisition of open space through the two Environmental Bond Acts.

Amended the County Government Law to require public access to all open spaces owned by Nassau County

Utilized Nassau County's Open Space Fund to sponsor the acquisition of open space adjoining Wantagh's Railroad Museum to prevent commercial development of the land

Have supported over \$10 million in capital enhancements to County parks in my district and supported a partnership with the Village of Freeport for the planned rehabilitation of Cow Meadow Park in Freeport including the restoration of the marina destroyed in Superstorm Sandy.

9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

Have provided ongoing funding and support for the Cornell Cooperative Extension to provide programming and educational resources regarding farming, nutrition and sustainable practices for home gardens and to support Cornell Cooperative Extension's active farm and farmstand at the East Meadow Farm.

