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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: **Tony Avella**

Office sought & district number: **City Council – District #19**

Campaign e-mail: **tonyavellafor NYC@gmail.com**

Campaign phone: **718-762-0235**

Website: **tonyavellafor NYC.com**

Facebook page: **/tonyavellafor NYC**

Twitter handle: **@tonyavella**

Campaign manager's name and email: **Seth Urbinder – urbinder2010@gmail.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.

Throughout my previous service as City Council Member (2002-2009) and the New York State Senate (2011-2018), I have always made the environment a top priority, introducing multiple pieces of legislation, acquiring more open space/parkland and allocating discretionary funding towards environmental groups and projects. For example, I was able to obtain \$1 million dollar grant for the Alley Pond Environmental Center.

In the Senate, I served years served as Ranking Member of the Senate's Environmental Committee and then Vice-Chair.

Prior to public service I served 9 years of service on my local community board as Environmental Committee Chair.

Before, during and after my elected service, I have been a volunteer for many park and waterfront clean-up efforts including for the Costal Preservation Network (College Point), the Friends of Crocheron and John Golden Parks (Bayside) and the Udalls Cove Preservation Committee (Little Neck and Douglaston).





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 fully support the goals highlighted in the Transportation section of your policy agenda. In the Senate, I was the author of S1502 Prohibiting Idling of passenger vehicles and S1327 Creating the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Loan Fund.

In the City Council, I advocated for the reform of the parking placard system and, if my memory is correct, I introduced legislation to curb abuses and increase enforcement. I also have a long standing practice of refusing the parking placard I was entitled to as Council Member and State Senator.

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)

I am proud of the reputation I have as a long standing advocate for parks and open spaces, increasing green space, and fighting against cuts to the Parks budget in the City Council. For example, during my public service as Council Member and State Senator I was able to obtain millions of dollars for the acquisition of additional park land (from private hands) in the Udalls Cove Preservation area.

I also was the lead named plaintiff in the successful landmark case (Avella et al v. City of New York) that strengthened the Public Trust Doctrine against illegal/questionable park alienation in New York State.

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 would be honored to support the goals of your Solid Waste agenda, including introducing the necessary legislation. I was a co-sponsor of several food waste related bills while serving in the Senate: S1079 Valesky, S3418 Parker and S5461 Parker.

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)

Combating climate change has to be our number one environmental goal. I am fully committed to supporting legislation to increase residential solar and energy programs, create new green jobs, and upgrade the City's wastewater treatment centers to process organic waste into renewable energy as well as the other objectives mentioned in your agenda.

In the Senate, I was the author of the Global Warming bill (S1584) and original sponsor of Climate and Community Protection Act (CCPA S6617-A)

6. Transportation (p. 5)

In the City Council, I advocated for the reform of the parking placard system and, if my memory is correct, I introduced legislation to curb abuses and increase enforcement. I also have a long standing practice of refusing the parking placard I was entitled to as Council Member and State Senator.

I was the first elected official in the City/State to advocate for legalizing sports betting, going back to my service in the New York City Council, as a way to achieve addition funding for transportation. It finally has the chance of becoming a reality.

Now that Congestion Pricing will soon go into effect, we must make sure that the funds are targeted to improving mass transit and related transportation issues and not misdirected towards eliminating budget gaps.

7. Resiliency (p. 6)

The goals mentioned in your agenda under Resiliency should be developed enacted as soon as possible. During my City council service, I served as Chair of Zoning. That knowledge would be very helpful in designing new zoning codes to protect homes in vulnerable areas as well as to develop exclusionary zones that may be necessary to prevent development in areas prone to storm surges and flooding.

In the Senate, I was the author of S1519 Natural Disaster and Preparedness Mitigation Act & CCPA.

8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

Same answer as above in question #4

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)

Same answer as in Question #3

10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

I would be happy to introduce legislation to increase cooperation between City agencies involved in construction to prevent exposure to lead dust/paint in buildings, require an in-depth investigation by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene of reports of elevated blood levels in a person under 18, and require improved tenant notification and interagency cooperation regarding any lead paint stop work order. I am shocked that legislation is still needed is this area.

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

While I previously have not been active on this issue, I support your efforts in this regard.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

I could not agree more with your proposals in this regard and stand ready if elected to introduce legislation to achieve these goals.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

I support the goals mentioned in your agenda. The only comment I would make is that the Departments of Transportation and Parks and Recreation have to do a better job of maintaining the existing bioswales/rain gardens and develop a more understandable and sensible approach to the placement of new facilities.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

In the Senate, I was the author of previously mentioned bills that deal with this subject. In addition, I was a co-sponsor of S36, Hoylman, NYS State Healthy and Green Procurement Act and Montgomery's S4486-A - Requires school districts to purchase food products that are grown, produced, harvested or processed in New York State.

Again, as I mentioned in a previous question, as a former Chair of the Council's Zoning Committee, I have the necessary experience to help design new zoning codes that would allow/permit/encourage urban agriculture practices in every neighborhood.