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2007 Questionnaire for Local Candidate

OVERVIEW

The science on climate change is in: Global warming is happening, and the enormity of the problem requires action at every level of government. Comprehensive solutions for climate change exist, but the years of refusal at the federal level have left the U.S. government behind the curve. Because of this, the real innovation on climate change in this country is happening at the local level. It's the mayors, county executives, and town supervisors in New York who can lead the way on climate change.

By “thinking globally and acting locally,” the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) is calling upon all candidates for local office to put the issue of climate change at heart of their campaign. Our sister organization, the New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (NYLCVEF) has compiled a list of actions state and local governments can take to address this important issue with examples of what’s been either done or proposed elsewhere in New York State.

Before responding to the questions on this questionnaire, we recommend you review this document.

PROCESS

After receipt of the questionnaire, you will be invited to participate in a formal interview with our local chapter board. The interview will provide you with an opportunity to present your credentials and vision for combating climate change on the local level, elaborate on your questionnaire responses, and respond to questions.

The completed questionnaire and interview are mandatory for endorsement consideration.

NYLCV will endorse and work to elect candidates who can demonstrate a willingness and capacity to advance a comprehensive climate action agenda for their municipality.

General Instructions

- Please submit questionnaire responses via email to: politics@nylcv.org
- Questions or extension requests may be directed to:
Joshua Klainberg, Political Director (jklainberg@nylcv.org)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide us with the following information:

Candidate Name: *Harry Tutunjian*

Position: *Mayor of Troy*

PERSONAL INITIATIVES:

1. What have been your most significant achievements to date on environmental issues?

Blessed with a walkable downtown, we have strived to implement plans that reduce emissions in the City of Troy. By extending the downtown into other sections of the City, we are attempting to create a walkable community in which people can live, work and play. Whether it is the Mooradian Lofts project, the reconstruction of Congress Ferry Street Corridor, the Conservatory, improvements along the Hudson River, or the Hedley District, we are leading the way for creating viable living and working conditions throughout the City. Where others talk about making change, we are doing it.

This coming fall we will break ground on a \$3 million signalization project at 26 intersections in Troy that will use state-of-the-art equipment to better regulate the flow of traffic. This plan will reduce emissions, improve pedestrian access, and advance the historic feel of our City.

2. Please outline your environmental priorities, should you be elected.

Our City planners continue to work diligently with all new developments on following LEEDS standards where applicable. With more than \$600 million of development set to begin in the next year, we have a great opportunity to not only revitalize the City, but also do so in an environmentally friendly way.

The Planning Department will continue to work closely with each developer to consider a variety of issues from traffic patterns to air quality.

For far too long the City of Troy has neglected its number one resource- the Hudson River. That is changing. With the expected development along the Hudson River, the City will partner with New York State leaders and private businesses developments to finally institute a full riverfront trail. As new developers have entered this City, this is one of their top requests and priorities.

COMMITTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE PRINCIPLES

3. Will you join the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign by introducing and passing a resolution pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from local government operations and throughout you municipality?

Recently I ordered that our diesel trucks begin using bio-diesel in an effort to accomplish the above. We are fortunate to have a bio-diesel distributor close to our Public Works garage, allowing this change to be accomplished quickly.

We will continue to seek out and support economic development within the downtown area that will also accomplish the above request. Investments that allow workers to live in a downtown environment, while not being auto dependent, is vitally important to my administration. And while it will help the environment, it also allows the City of Troy to become a 24-hour place again, and not a 9 to 5 town. To this end we have been successful in applying for Main Street Grant's that give funding to property owners to renovate the upper floors of their buildings for residential purposes.

Under the leadership of my administration we also applied for and were subsequently awarded "Preserve America" status by the federal government. During my tenure as Mayor, Historic Districts in the City of Troy have been expanded.

4. Will you enter your municipality into the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, whereby you would commit to take the following actions...

I would be pleased to meet with the Mayor's and Supervisors of the Capital District to develop an action plan that the entire region would be willing to support. Strength is in numbers.

What we must accomplish is a balance between protecting the environment and continuing to do all we can to stimulate economic development in our urban core areas. Recently we worked closely with the company E-Lots and moved its headquarters to Troy. These electronics recyclers are the perfect example of environmentally friendly economic development. They chose Troy, and we will continue to seek out companies that can accomplish both tasks.

LEADERSHIP

Based on what's been either done or proposed by other local governments in New York State, ideas from outside of the state or your own original ideas, please outline your plans to address the following areas:

1. Air Quality

As stated before the signalization plan that will be completed next summer will go a long way towards eliminating excess emissions from cars. It follows up on similar program recently implemented along Second Avenue in North Troy. We continue to seek grant funding for these opportunities so that we will eventually address the City as a whole.

In the last few months we have formed a partnership with longtime Troy business owners to Ross Valve to remove the smokestack from its Oakwood Avenue Foundry and Casting business and turn it from a more environmentally friendly business.

2. Energy Efficiency

3. Green Building Development

Green rooftops are being reviewed currently by the City in anticipation of incorporating them into design guidelines. We also hope that the Congress-Ferry Street Corridor will have at least one green building built within two years.

We have a wonderful relationship with John Ray and Sons to promote and use alternative fuels in everyday life. We are working on a program to promote this not only throughout the City, but the region as well. This measure again doubles as an opportunity to help the environment while escalating the benefits Troy receives.

At the municipal level, we are aggressively seeking a new location to move City Hall so that we may replace this decades old building with one that is more efficient.

4. Smart Growth

Troy gives new meaning to smart growth. We have projects that are currently bringing the definition of adaptive re-use to life. Whether it is the Powers Park Lofts in Lansingburgh (a former factory), the Mooradian Lofts (former furniture store on the River), or the Conservatory (formerly Stanley's Department store), we are using old buildings to bring residents back into an urban environment.

At Congress-Ferry Street, where others would have bitten at the first development to come along, we have worked for nearly two years to put a plan into place that will turn the 13 acres of vacant land into an actual community, not a drive by strip mall. We have collaborated with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the Troy Housing Authority, Rensselaer County and local developers like the United Group and John Hedley, to ensure that the "right" development occurs here, not just any development.

In the past three years we have purchased blighted property such as King Fuels, Portec, and Jack's Junkyard along the Hudson River so that we may better take advantage of the resource we have in the Hudson River. The King Fuels site is where E-Lots currently stands, and more development will come. Along with the Portec Site, this 35-acre campus will soon be remediated by National Grid so that new development can take place.

We purchased Jack's Junkyard with the simple intent of making it green again. Building a place where people can play along the River, will not only help in our conservation efforts, but also bring new people to the area. We have also acquired parklands along the mighty Poesten Kill on Mill Street that we intent to open up for more public use.

I define Smart Growth as a balancing effort to bring new development and tax base to the City of Troy, while making sure the environmental aspect is not only remembered, but also used to strengthen our community long term.

The City of Troy is the leader in Smart Growth in the area, and I pledge that when I am re-elected the measures we have taken in the past three plus years will continue to grow.