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2007 Questionnaire for Local Candidates

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 the following:

Candidate Name: *Phil Amicone*

District #: *n/a*

PERSONAL INITIATIVES

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

The environmental hallmark of my administration will undoubtedly be the reclamation and restoration of Yonkers' three great waterways: the Hudson, Saw Mill and Bronx Rivers. Those who have taken in majestic views of the Palisades from Yonkers know that our city's Hudson River waterfront is truly one of New York's unique environmental treasures. But for decades the waterfront was off limits to the people, cut off by rail lines and consumed by industrial polluters. Now we have begun to reclaim the Hudson River for the people of Yonkers while committing tens of millions (both public and private monies) to the environmental cleanup of brownfields along the river—and we're making great progress. Eventually, all four-and-a-half miles of Hudson River waterfront in the Yonkers will be a single, continuous, open and accessible public promenade that will preserve the environmental sensitivity and beauty of this natural resource.

In addition, we are unearthing—"daylighting"—the Saw Mill River through downtown Yonkers, a river that was channeled underground and paved over nearly a century ago. This daylighting project will take three-to-five years, but will eventually emerge as one of Yonkers' most recognizable environmental landmarks, as the Saw Mill will wind gently through the downtown, emptying into the Hudson River just as it did 100 years ago.

My administration has also committed to the most significant environmental cleanup of the Bronx and Saw Mill Rivers in our city's history. Mistakes made decades ago, when many of our neighborhoods were first developed, led to the unfortunate pollution of these historic rivers. Now, working along with New York State, we are cleaning them up—correcting mistakes of the past and ensuring their longevity for the future.

Other notable environmental accomplishments of my administration include the establishment of a Green Policy Task Force to monitor and propose environmental policy in the City of Yonkers; the creation of an Urban Green Space Initiative that is reclaiming mixed-use urban areas as new parkland (note: more than 15 acres have been dedicated just this year); new environmental curricula in our public schools, including a partnership with the environmental and arts community to educate children about waste and recycling (our public school students even decorated garbage trucks with environmental art!); and Yonkers' admittance to the U.S. Mayors Against Climate Change and Cities for Climate Protection coalitions.

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

Environmental priorities in my second term will include:

- *Establishment of a new Green Buildings Policy for new development in downtown Yonkers*

- *Commissioning an energy and greenhouse gas emissions inventory of the City of Yonkers, aimed at reducing energy consumption and pollution*
- *Continuation of our cleanup and opening of the Hudson and Saw Mill Rivers*
- *Expansion of the Urban Green Space Initiative to reclaim and preserve even more open space.*

COMMITTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE PRINCIPLES

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

I signed this legislation earlier this year.

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

- Strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns?
- Urge state government, and the federal government, to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol – 7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012?
- Urge the U.S. Congress to pass the bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system?

At my direction, the City of Yonkers joined this coalition earlier this year.

LEADERSHIP

Based on what's been either done or proposed by other local governments in New York State (see the NYLCVEF fact sheet at www.nylcvef.org/localgov), ideas from outside of the state or your own original ideas, please outline your plans to address the following areas:

5. Air Quality

We will continue to explore the use of alternative fuel vehicles among the city's fleet, taking advantage of government grants and partnerships when available. I also plan on commissioning an energy and greenhouse gas emissions inventory of the City of Yonkers, aimed at reducing energy consumption and pollution.

6. Energy Efficiency

See response to #5.

7. Green Building Development

With an unprecedented surge of private investment in our city's economy fueling one of the largest urban redevelopment programs in the United States, there is a unique opportunity to introduce green building technology as the new ideal in Yonkers. Modeled after successful green building programs in Battery Park City, my intent is to develop a Green Building Policy for the City of Yonkers.

8. Smart Growth

Much has been made of the exciting new development occurring throughout the City of Yonkers—and rightfully so. But we are also doing many things to ensure that pristine open space stays that way, and to reclaim mix-use commercial, industrial and vacant land as new parkland. My administration is committed to maintaining the delicate and necessary balance between urban redevelopment and conservation, i.e. smart growth