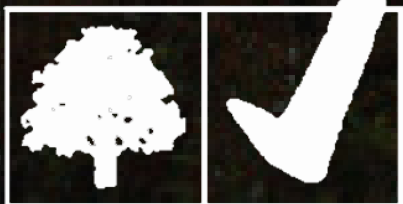


Blueprint for a Greener Long Island 2016-2017



NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND

INTRODUCTION

Every two years, the New York League of Conservation Voters Long Island Chapter works closely with local advocates to develop a policy agenda. This Blueprint for a Greener Long Island provides specific actions government officials can take to fight climate change, conserve our lands and waters, and protect public health.

Climate change is not only transforming our world, it's transforming Long Island. Recent severe storms destroyed our infrastructure, damaged our neighborhoods, and changed our landscape. We must become more resilient to the next storm, but we must also work to mitigate the long-term effects of a changing climate by promoting renewable

energy, building efficiency, sustainable transportation, and better solid waste management.

Long Island boasts vibrant natural resources, from national and state parks to renowned beaches to waterways, like the Long Island Sound and Peconic Bay. Yet they are being threatened by development, pollution, and chronic underfunding. We must safeguard and restore them for the next generation.

Finally, we must make sure that we take steps to protect public health. Every Long Islander deserves access to clean air, well-maintained parks for recreation, fresh food from local farms, and protection from toxic chemicals.

TOP PRIORITIES

- **Expand Solar Power** - Solar photovoltaic power is a cost effective and scalable form of renewable energy. Many challenges, however, are slowing its implementation. We will work with municipalities to streamline and standardize regulations that will spur additional large-scale and rooftop solar installations.
- **Improve Water Quality** - Nitrogen overload is on nearly everyone's mind across Long Island. The causes of nitrogen overload are myriad but we will focus on identifying financing mechanisms to replace failing septic systems.
- **LIRR Third Track** - Transportation contributes to over 30% of Long Island's greenhouse gas emissions. Ensuring that the Long Island Rail Road completes a planned third main line track from Floral Park to Hicksville will remove a bottleneck in the commuter rail system, making service more frequent and reliable, and thereby reducing highway traffic by getting cars off the roads.
- **Expand Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure** - EVs reduce greenhouse gas emissions and emit zero particulate matter, improving air quality. A larger network of charging stations will encourage more municipalities, businesses and individuals to switch to EVs in the coming years. We will work with state and local officials to make this a reality.



Left: Additional electric vehicle charging infrastructure is needed to speed up the rate of electric vehicle adoption. Right: A third rail on the LIRR will increase reliability and the frequency of service, helping to take cars off the road and reduce congestion on highways.

SUSTAINABLE & TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Rising housing costs, traffic congestion and the lack of coordinated planning pose serious threats to the region's economic future, and a car-dependent transportation system has led to substantial environmental challenges. A comprehensive growth strategy is needed to address these threats and to create livable and sustainable communities.

- Modernize zoning, tax incentives, and regulations to encourage mixed land use, compact development, downtown revitalization, open space protection, and historic preservation.
- Support the expansion of workforce housing in all communities to mitigate the need for workers to commute.
- Identify and encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites, and utilize the Brownfields Opportunity Area program to ensure local communities are engaged.
- Work with local towns to develop downtown revitalization plans.
- Adopt a Climate Smart Community resolution.
- Redesign arterial streets as “complete streets” in order to make communities more walkable and bikeable.
- Implement traffic calming projects, lower speed limits, install electronic speed enforcement, increase penalties and enforcement for reckless and dangerous driving, and other initiatives focused on safety on all streets.
- Ensure waterfront development is consistent with smart growth goals and facilitates public access to waterfront and the water.
- Re-establish Conservation Advisory Councils to encourage local and regional coordination.

TRANSPORTATION

Maximizing use of transit networks and developing new mixed-use housing and commercial centers that are accessible to energy-efficient mass transit will help fight climate change while enabling economic activity. Transit is key to developing walkable neighborhoods and towns.

- Enhance public transportation by creating dedicated bus lanes, bike and pedestrian trails networks, and protected bike lanes that connect residential to commercial areas, parks, and green spaces.
- Increase funding for regional transit and increase service and routes; improve inter-connectivity between buses, trains, and planes.
- Encourage bike share and car share initiatives.
- Encourage electric vehicle charging station networks.
- Support full funding of the MTA capital plan, especially the East Side Access project, completion of the double track, and a third track along the main line.
- Support mass transit connectivity in the Nassau Hub and Connect Long Island plans.



Left: Long Island's farms produce a wide variety of fresh and local produce, which is critical for fighting climate and for improving public health. Right: Sunken Forest, a globally rare marine holly forest, is among Long Island's treasured preserves and parks.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Open space is quickly disappearing or under development pressure throughout the region. Local leaders should support planning strategies such as clustering, creating pocket parks in developed areas, and encouraging biotic corridors in less densely populated areas.

- Expand regional and local land banks to preserve green space for livable neighborhoods.
- Create local community gardens and urban farms, and encourage their conservation easements to be held by a land trust or municipality.
- Protect open space from development by promoting local bond initiatives, conservation land trusts, community preservation funds, dedicated revenue streams for conservation, transfers of development rights, and reduced property taxes for open space.
- Adopt zoning that preserves existing green space and open space set-asides.

SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC ASSET MANAGEMENT

Local and regional governments can make significant impacts on energy use and the environment simply by deciding to spend money and deploy resources wisely.

- Purchase energy from renewable sources.
- Purchase Energy Star-rated equipment.
- Install solar and wind generation on public buildings.
- Increase clean energy purchasing power through intra-governmental aggregation.
- Convert municipal vehicle fleets to hybrid, electric, or other clean energy vehicles.
- Plant street trees and support other “green streets” initiatives.
- Create programming in parks, farms and other open space to encourage the public’s use and appreciation of them.
- Conduct energy audits of municipal facilities.
- Develop a plan to reduce each locality’s total fossil fuel use by 4% each year, in line with an Energy Descent Action Plan.
- Fund public education and outreach on existing energy efficiency incentives.
- Participate in PACE financing programs to increase clean energy installation and use.
- Upgrade street lights to energy-efficient LED bulbs.
- Adopt Integrated Pest Management plans for publicly-owned buildings and land to reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides.

ENERGY

A major pillar of a climate action plan is energy efficiency. This can be achieved in many ways: in residential and commercial settings, in existing and new buildings, and with cutting-edge technology and the smarter use of older technology.

- Adopt green building standards for new residential and commercial construction projects.
- Remove impediments in laws, codes and practices to streamline the process for homeowners and business owners to install renewable energy sources.
- Create incentives for energy-efficient upgrades in existing buildings and new developments.
- Design and support programs that target affordable and low-income populations to ensure equitable delivery of reliable clean energy through micro grids and efficiency programs.
- Expand the use of biofuel blends in home heating oil, commercial buildings, and vehicles—especially vehicles used in dense urban areas with high levels of childhood asthma.
- Encourage the adoption of #2 home heating oil or natural gas to replace #4 and #6 oil.
- Pass local ordinances to control light pollution.
- Support clean-energy projects, such as micro grids, solar, wind, distributed energy and efficiency investments.
- Support Long Island-based renewable industries providing solar, wind and energy storage to a smarter, more resilient energy grid.
- Ensure PSEG expands LIPA’s renewable energy and efficiency programs, retrofits or replaces existing plants to improve efficiency and reduce pollution, improves storm resiliency, and makes meaningful investments in Long Island’s large-scale renewable energy generation.

WATER QUALITY & AQUIFER PROTECTION

Water is essential to life on Long Island—not only for drinking but for recreation and agriculture. Clean water also promotes economic development, creates jobs, and spurs industry.

- Complete the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan and develop a strong nitrogen management plan with targets for nitrogen reduction.
- Invest in wastewater treatment plant upgrades to remove nitrogen effectively and consistently to restore the health of our waterways, oceans, and bays.
- Support an ocean outfall pipe with de-nitrification technology for the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Facility.
- Support rigorous monitoring of wastewater treatment plants to ensure compliance with permitted nitrogen levels.
- Seek funding on behalf of the agricultural community through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- Encourage continued US Geological Service participation in ground water aquifer testing and mapping on Long Island specifically for monitoring saltwater intrusion in vulnerable areas.
- Adopt and implement updated plans and regulations that integrate best-available, next-generation septic systems.
- Identify a comprehensive funding source for septic upgrades, replacement and alternative septic management initiatives.
- Adopt revised Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund initiative to extend fund and allow some of the fund to be used for water quality projects.
- Adopt more stringent vegetation clearing standards in Special Groundwater Protection Areas.
- Work with homeowners, public agencies and the agricultural community to implement sustainable management practices that promote water quality.
- Develop and build sewer systems in targeted priority areas.
- Develop stormwater and agriculture runoff management programs for key watershed and estuary areas across Long Island.
- Implement comprehensive pesticide reduction and phase out plans, particularly in Special Groundwater Protection Areas, based on sound science and risk assessment.
- Incentivize smart water growth through smart technology and green infrastructure.



Left: Nitrogen overload and other water quality issues are causing mass fish die-offs in our waterways, like the one seen here in Peconic Bay. Right: A large-scale solar farm in Brookhaven, which is helping Long Island become increasingly energy independent.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

Managing and protecting regional natural resources will require a comprehensive effort that looks at air, water and land.

- Reduce the use of single-use bags and encourage re-useable bags through fees and regulations.
- Provide incentives for communities, property owners and developers to manage storm water on-site with a variety of technologies such as green roofs, bioswales, rain gardens and rain barrels, and implement strategies outlined in storm water management plans.
- Encourage the use of native plants for landscaping and implement programs to address the growing threat of invasive species.
- Develop waste reduction plans and maximize the use of anaerobic digestion by engaging schools, restaurants and municipal food composting programs.
- Prioritize and fund a forestry and tree regeneration program, including downtown and main street areas.
- Develop regional, county and local plans to restore streams and other water resources.
- Protect parks and playgrounds from alienation of parkland.
- Encourage permeable paving surfaces.
- Continue carrying out the Long Island Sound, Peconic and South Shore Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMP) to restore and preserve the estuaries by incorporating CCMP recommendations into enforceable town and village codes.

FARMS AND LOCAL FOOD

A vibrant agricultural sector plays a key role in managing development and providing access to healthy, fresh foods.

- Work with the state Department of Agriculture and Markets to expand the FreshConnect Program to create more farmers markets throughout the region—especially in “food desert” communities.
- Explore and encourage funding streams for farmland and open space that can leverage private and public dollars.
- Maintain productive farmland through the acquisition and donation of development rights.
- Create outreach and awareness campaigns to take advantage of the growing popularity of regional agriculture, sustainable viticulture and local agricultural products.
- Adopt affordable farmland and affirmative farming legislation that ensures protected land remains farmed for food production.
- On the East End, enhance agricultural districts within which farmers receive incentives and benefits to continue to use their land for agricultural purposes. Such incentives include changes to real property tax and estate tax treatment of working farms, protections against local laws that inhibit farming practices, and incentive zoning such as Agricultural Planned Development Districts.



Marcia Bystryn, President
Christopher Goeken, Director of Public Policy and Government Relations
Jordan Levine, Communications Director

30 Broad Street, 30th Floor
New York, NY 10004
Phone: 212-361-6350
www.nylcv.org
www.nylcvef.org

Long Island Chapter Board

Mitchell H. Pally, Chair

Barbara Blass

Lauren Brookmeyer

Robert Carpenter

Matthew Cohen

Daniel Deegan

Christian DiPalermo

Christopher Hahn

Jesse Hiney

Richard Kessel

Robert McBride

Michael Perciballi

Alexander Peters

Kenneth Pritchard

Jennifer Rimmer

James Tripp

Rosalind Walrath

Michael Zapon

NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS, INC.

NYLCV is the only nonpartisan, statewide environmental organization in New York that fights for clean water, clean air, renewable energy and open space through political action.

NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND, INC.

NYLCVEF educates, engages and empowers New Yorkers to be effective advocates for the environment.