

**Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg  
Keynote Address  
NY League of Conservation Voters  
Chelsea Piers  
May 18, 2006**

Check Against Delivery

What a great spring night! The city's flowers are in bloom... the city's budget is in balance...and we're on the verge of the first-and I hope, not the last-Subway series of the year.

But National League... American League: Tonight, for me there's only one League that really matters.

And I'm delighted to join the League of Conservation Voters in honoring two men who are truly in a league all their own:

Two of our state's great public servants and true conservation heroes: John Cahill and Congressman Sherwood Boehlert.

As a Commissioner of the State's Department of Environmental Conservation, John's record of improving the environment of the Empire State is unsurpassed.

For generations to come, New Yorkers will have him-and Governor Pataki-to thank for the remarkable reclamation of the great river that rolls past these very Chelsea Piers.

As for Sherwood, over the past 24 years he has merely been the conservation conscience of our Congress.

Across those years, he's also been living proof that modesty is the true mark of nobility.

For example, when a reporter recently asked him to reflect on the meaning of his career, he instead talked about the proud conservation heritage of the Republican Party, and approvingly recalled this campaign slogan from years gone by: "If fish could vote, they'd vote for Nelson Rockefeller."

Well, if the inhabitants of the Hudson could vote tonight, they'd be "casting," not fish lures, but fish votes, for Sherwood.

Throughout their careers, both John and Sherwood have shown that conservation is, indeed, not a partisan issue.

Because when it comes to protecting our environment, all of us-Republicans, Democrats, and independents-have the ability, and the duty, to do the right thing.

That's something that the League of Conservation voters understands very well.

In advocating policies and making endorsements over the years, you've always looked at performance-not at party labels... at a candidate's record, not at his or her rhetoric.

I know that that's true, from happy personal experience. Last year, you evaluated what our Administration has achieved since 2002:

In creating 300 acres of new City parks, many of them on long-neglected stretches of our wonderful waterfront... and in vastly expanding our protection of the City's vital Upstate watershed.

You looked at the risks we ran and the resolve we showed in passing the pioneering Smoke-Free Air Act...

And at our willingness to use litigation to protect the health of our children, and our state's forests, to stop the air pollution and acid rain produced by coal-burning power plants in the Midwest.

In fact, you looked at everything we've done to safeguard our environment, and saw a consistent thread: a commitment to sustainability. And because of that, almost 12 months ago to this day, you enthusiastically endorsed me for re-election.

That meant a great deal to me, and let me take this opportunity tonight to thank you once again.

Well, here we are again, a year later. And tonight, I want to stress that everything we accomplished in our first term-as sweeping and effective as it was-was just the prologue.

Now, we must build on and lock in all those achievements. Because they represent the foundation for the next step:

That of making ours a truly "sustainable city"-one that fosters responsible growth for the people of New York City today, while also preserving opportunity for our children tomorrow.

Sustainability is a philosophy of realistic optimism. It demands that we make sound investments today to meet the challenges of tomorrow, and find innovative long-term solutions to our most intractable problems. And it's within our power to do that-if we are confident, creative, and courageous.

Thankfully, this being New York, none of those qualities is in short supply-especially confidence. So let's start there.

Last November's election returns were a strong vote of confidence-a reflection of the optimism New Yorkers feel about the city's future.

That same sense of confidence-the feeling that New York's best days are still to come-is evident throughout the city.

You can see it, for example, in the way that our population, already at an all-time high, continues to steadily grow.

In fact, by 2010, we will have added a city the size of Pittsburgh-325,000 people-to the population of the five boroughs during this decade.

At the same time, New York's built environment is also being dramatically transformed-another clear measure of confidence in our future.

Bronx to Staten Island's Homeport, areas once plagued by abandonment and neglect are being rezoned, redeveloped, and reinvented.

Public policy and private investment are giving communities across our city new life for a new century. A fitting symbol of this new era of hope will come this summer, when we break ground for the extension of the Number 7 line to Manhattan's Far West Side-the first major expansion of our subway system in 20 years.

Now, let's combine that confidence in the future with the creativity and courage that are also so characteristic of New York.

Let's take the values of sustainability-which have been the hallmark of all our environmental achievements for the past four years-and weave them into the city's future for decades to come.

Developing strategies for sustainability is a major priority for our Administration. Currently, Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff is leading an effort

We want your active partnership in that effort. So tonight, I want the League of Conservation Voters to be the first to know that we will shortly be naming a task force that will help us frame the city's environmental agenda for the years to come.

It will include leaders from the environmental and business communities, as well as top City officials.

And it will work closely with a new "Division of Sustainability" that we will establish in the Mayor's Office of Operations. Its goal will be nothing short of formalizing policies of sustainability as integral to the future growth and development of our city.

We've already taken long strides in that direction during our first term. Policies promoting sustainability have been at the core of all we've done to improve water and air quality... to

encourage “green” public and private construction... to develop an innovative solution to the city’s long-term solid waste management needs... and to continue the creative reclamation of once decaying and decrepit areas of our city.

Sustainability drives, for example, our strategic investments in protecting the quality of the water we drink, and in improving the health of the bays and rivers that surround our city.

Our commitment to completing the Third Water Tunnel shows that.

Begun under Mayor Lindsay, it’s a project that has stretched across the decades, as the City’s funding for it has waxed and waned.

But not on our watch!

Even in the first years of our Administration, when we faced record, multi-billion dollar, back-to-back budget shortfalls, we refused to shortchange this essential project.

In fact, since coming into office, we’ve committed close to \$4 billion in funding for the Third Water Tunnel-double what’s been invested by the last five Administrations-combined! And as a result, we expect the activated portions of the Tunnel to be serving communities in all five boroughs by 2009.

We’re also on course to complete, by 2011, the filtration plant for water coming from the Croton reservoir-a massive and vital \$1.6 billion project. And we’re investing another \$3.2 billion in major upgrades to the City’s 14 wastewater treatment plants.

Sustainability is also the driving force behind our success in cleaning New York City’s air, which has the dual benefits of improving public health while also fighting climate change.

As part of our commitment to the goals of the Kyoto agreement, we’ve adopted a seven-year timetable aimed at substantially lowering the discharge of greenhouse gases in New York City to pre-1990 levels.

As they should, our City agencies are leading the way. Largely because we maintain the largest alternative-fuel municipal fleet in the nation...

Today, City agencies have cut greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 350,000 tons a year.

All of the City’s sanitation trucks and street cleaners use clean-burning fuels.

Legislation I signed last spring is further cutting emissions from off-road construction equipment, school buses, and thousands of other City-operated or leased vehicles.

And tonight, I’m pleased to announce that we’re doing even more to clean New York’s air. Currently, there are only 27 alternative-fuel taxicabs in the city. Next month, we’re

putting 308 more cab medallions on sale. And I've directed the City's Taxi and Limousine Commission to require that 254 of these new medallions must be for alternative-fuel cabs.

That means New York City will soon have ten times more alternative-fuel cabs than we now have.

Think of it this way: every time cabbies step on the accelerators of one those taxis, they'll be helping to put the brakes on global warming.

But we're certainly not stopping there. We're also moving ahead aggressively to fight climate change by setting sustainable standards in public and private development.

That's why last year, I signed Local Law 86. It will take full effect at the end of this year. And it will make New York City truly "the Green Apple"-

By mandating energy conservation and environmentally conscious design in work on an estimated \$12 billion worth of City buildings, as well as private projects receiving substantial City funding.

We're also moving to encourage greater sustainable private development. By this time next year, the Department of Buildings will have put a fully revised City Building Code before the City Council...

...One that will make it far easier for private developers to incorporate sustainable design features as-of-right in their projects.

Kermit the Frog had a hit song a few years ago, lamenting that "It's Not Easy Being Green." For frogs, I suppose, that's always going to be the case. But we're very quickly making it easier to be green-and sustainable-in building the new New York.

Sustainability is also at the heart of our Administration's innovative plan to finally put solid waste management in New York on a sound, secure, and just environmental and economic footing.

I'm sure most of you know the principal virtue of this plan:

Its reliance on water- and rail-based containerized transport to replace the enormously expensive current use of highway-clogging, diesel-burning 18-wheelers.

I can't thank the League of Conservation Voters enough for your strong support of this Solid Waste Management Plan. That support was essential to helping us win an important victory for that plan last spring. And with your continued help, and with the cooperation and input of the City Council, I'm very confident that this year, the plan will become law.

Of course, for many years, the symbol of New York's failure to come to terms with sustainability in solid waste management was the Fresh Kills landfill.

And I think it speaks volumes about where our city is headed that in converting what was once the world's largest landfill into the biggest new City park in 100 years...

We're transforming one generation's trash into another's treasure-a fitting embodiment of our new ethic of sustainability.

So is our ambitious remediation of the city's former brownfields. Brownfield reclamation is a major, innovative element in our Administration's historic affordable housing initiative-and we've already funded brownfield clean-ups that will lead to development of 10,000 new affordable apartments.

Brownfields are also being turned into new open spaces. Just last month, Marcia joined Governor Pataki and me to announce the clean-up of another brownfield in Sunset Park-the first step to converting it into a new 23-acre waterfront park.

All of these are examples of creatively re-using New York's past. And the crown jewel of these reclamation projects is the creation of what is destined to become the world's greatest waterfront destination:

New York's new Harbor District, which is already taking shape.

Construction will begin this year on a new 85-acre Brooklyn Bridge Park that will offer kayaking, fishing, and nature walks in the heart of the world's greatest city.

The plans have already been made to establish a two-mile waterfront esplanade stretching north from the Battery along Manhattan's East River waterfront.

And before the year is out, we'll be moving ahead with at long-last awakening the Sleeping Beauty of New York Harbor-Governors Island-and giving it a future worthy of its incomparable location.

We are, in short, on the verge of reinventing the historic gateway to New York-and making it the entry point to a new and exciting future.

And that would only be fitting. Nearly 400 years ago, Henry Hudson piloted his ship, the Half-Moon, into our bewitchingly beautiful harbor. He was looking for the Northwest Passage, the pathway to fame and fortune that has lured so many to our shores.

He didn't find what he was looking for; instead he discovered something more valuable than he could ever have imagined:

A gateway to the continent, and the future home of the world's greatest city. Let's work together to see that New York always remains the gateway to the future-a sustainable future-for centuries to come. Thank you very much, and God bless you all.