

West LA Group Candidate Statements  
election year 2020

Candidate Statements are in Ballot Order (top to bottom)

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Jason Islas

An activist and former journalist, I specialize in climate change, sustainable transportation, and how local policies can encourage -- or impede -- inclusive cities.

I currently serve as an elected member-at-large on the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee. I also serve as secretary of the Club's L.A. County Political Committee. I grew up, a child of working-class Latino parents, in Santa Monica where I currently live car-free. I am a frequent hiker and fierce advocate for policies that create healthy, walkable, family-friendly cities near transit. I firmly believe that allowing communities to grow inclusively while preventing sprawl, reducing energy use, and preserving existing open spaces is essential to reducing the impact of climate change.

Much of my activism has focused on sustainable urbanism, low- and zero-carbon transportation systems, and affordable housing, both as an individual advocate and through several organizations in which I am active, including the LA County Democratic Party, the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica, LA Forward, and local smart-growth group Santa Monica Forward.

I ask for your support so I can bring my voice and my vision for a more diverse and inclusive Sierra Club and West Los Angeles to the West LA Executive Committee.

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Dr. Khin Khin Gyi

As a 30-year resident of Culver Crest near the Inglewood Oil Field (IOF), I have been speaking out against drilling and fracking there since the evacuations caused by release of noxious hydrogen sulfide and methane in late 2005 and early 2006. In 2009, as a board member of the Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community, we studied the prevalence of asthma, hypertension and cancer in residents living around the IOF.

As a member of Sierra Club since 2014 and as a member of the Sierra Club's Clean Break Team since its inception, I have been lobbying for the election of progressive council members to the Culver City City Council. Our efforts were

successful and as a result, our new Culver City City Council voted to phase out oil extraction in the Culver City portion of the IOF.

I would be honored to continue work with the Sierra Club toward banning fracking and drilling in the entire IOF as a member of the West LA Group's Executive Committee. I am running for a seat on the Culver City Council to ensure that oil operations are phased out at the municipal level.

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Kathy Seal

Kathy Seal leads the West LA/Santa Monica Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby, a national grassroots organization which focuses on national carbon fee and dividend legislation to curb climate change. That principle is currently embodied in the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (HR 2763), whose co-sponsors include Ted Lieu and Karen Bass.

Kathy previously chaired the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign of the Angeles Chapter, and co-chaired (with the Club's then-Transportation Committee Chair Darrell Clarke) Friends4Expo, the grassroots campaign that brought the Expo Line from downtown to the beach. Recently, Kathy served on the West Los Angeles Group's political team.

A writer and mother, Kathy sees combating global warming as an emergency that we must take on immediately, leaving no Black, Brown, Native American, or low-income community behind. That means, for example, supporting the ongoing efforts against oil extraction in neighborhoods.

She'd be honored to serve on the Management Committee with the dedicated and accomplished environmentalists also running.

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Dr. Leah Pressman

Culver City activist, elected delegate to the California State Democratic Party (54th District), psychologist in private practice, Assistant Clinical Professor at UCLA Medical School. After witnessing pro-business City Council members poke holes in Culver City's plastics ban, I joined the successful campaigns for Sierra Club-endorsed candidates Daniel Lee and Alex Fisch to replace them. Since then, I have canvassed for Holly Mitchell for County Supervisor and with Sea Change in Palmdale to unseat Republican climate deniers in the House. My husband and I

modeled for the Clean Power Alliance’s social media campaign. I am currently the field organizer for School Board candidate Paula Amezola, whose platform highlights climate justice. I spoke at numerous city council meetings in favor of the plastics ban, closing down our portion of the Inglewood oil field, and tough environmental building standards/reach codes. With Protect Culver City Renters, I have fought for renter protections so that people can live where they work instead of commuting. I believe that climate justice is social justice.

#### Organizations

- \* Culver City Community Coalition – steering committee
- \* Protect Culver City Renters
- \* Culver City Action Network
- \* Culver City Democratic Club
- \* Member, Environmental Caucus, State Democratic Party

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Meghan Sahli-Wells

Meghan Sahli-Wells, Council Member and former Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells is the fifth woman to be elected to the Culver City Council in the city’s 103-year history. Her most notable achievements include:

- \* making Culver City a 100% renewable energy city
- \* steering multiple bicycle, pedestrian, and transit initiatives
- \* launching Culver City’s equity & youth empowerment work
- \* establishing Culver City’s anti-racist & Sanctuary City policies
- \* leading the city’s sustainable water initiatives & polystyrene ban
- \* championing affordable housing & groundbreaking tenant protections
- \* spearheading efforts to phase out oil drilling in the Inglewood Oil Field

She holds leadership positions in several national, statewide and regional organizations:

- \* Founding Board Member Local Progress
- \* Co-chair Elected Officials to Protect California
- \* Member Zero Traffic Fatalities Task Force
- \* Board Member Local Government Commission
- \* Regional Council Member Southern California Association of Governments
- \* Board Director Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee
- \* Board Director Clean Power Alliance
- \* Board Director Westside Cities Council of Governments
- \* Former Board Director Metro Expo (E) Line Construction Authority Board

Sahli-Wells earned two bachelor’s degrees from UCLA where she majored in World Arts and Cultures, and in French. She lived in France for 14 years and has traveled extensively, studying visual anthropology and working as a translator before moving back to her hometown Culver City.

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Paul Cooley

Paul Cooley, attorney, systems engineer, and life member of the Sierra Club, has been Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Angeles Chapter for ten years, serving either as the West Los Angeles (WLA) Group's delegate to that body or as an at-large member. He has also served on the WLA Group's Management Committee for many years, and was chair of the Desert Peaks Section for three years.

Paul is also an active birder, and was an NPS docent for over twenty years while leading birdwalks in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. At UCLA in the late 1950s, Paul was president of the Bruin Mountaineers for three years. Paul climbed El Picacho del Diablo, in Baja California's Sierra San Pedro Martir, six times out of eight tries in those and subsequent years, along with more than a hundred other peaks in California, Oregon, Arizona, and Colorado.

Paul remains an active and ardent conservationist, and is supportive of efforts to make the Club and the Chapter more inclusive. Paul would welcome your vote to continue serving on the WLA Executive Committee and would do all that he can to continue supporting a strong environment for us and our children.

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