



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WASHINGTON

Empowering all Washingtonians to engage in a more responsible and responsive democracy

2018 ISSUE PAPER – CLIMATE CHANGE

Position Statement:

The League of Women Voters US has been at the forefront of the environmental protection movement for decades, consistently supporting legislation to preserve our nation’s natural resources and protect our public health. The League's Natural Resources positions do not specifically mention climate change. So, the League's advocacy work on climate change is based on the board's interpretation of the League's Natural Resources positions. In 1998, the League also articulated a “position” on global warming stating that the League “believes that global warming is a serious issue that requires immediate action.” The decision of the 2008 LWVUS Convention committee to include a plenary panel on climate change reflects the growing concern with this issue.

The LWVUS position is that we support legislation that seeks to protect our country from the physical, economic, and public health effects of climate change while also providing pathways to economic prosperity. The League of Women Voters supports sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

The League supports legislative solutions that include setting caps on greenhouse gas and carbon pollution from new and existing power plants which are the largest source of industrial carbon pollution in the United States today. The League works to build grassroots support for action on climate change nationally and at the state and local levels in order to avoid irrevocable damage to our planet.

Background:

Carbon emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and other sources have caused the rise in global temperatures (“greenhouse effect”). The effects of climate change on Washington State are:

- Ocean warming affecting marine life, including salmon survival
- Rising sea levels which threaten shorelines
- Ocean acidification affecting marine life and the shellfish industry
- Extreme weather events, including flooding and drought, affecting riparian habitats, instream flows, water supplies and irrigated agriculture
- Wildfires which destroy carbon sequestering forests
- Declining air quality

Pending Issues for the 2018 Legislative Session:

Our priority is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, put a price on carbon, and enact measures to promote climate resiliency.

The 2017 Legislature considered several **carbon tax bills** that the LWV supported, but none passed. Rising carbon levels and associated climate change effects make putting a price on carbon more urgent than ever. The LWV supported 2017 bills which would have required amending state **greenhouse gas emissions**, but these bills also failed. A plan to reduce greenhouse gases to levels consistent with best available science (350 parts per million) as soon as possible would be advisable.

To address Climate Change, the LWV also supports protecting **Initiative 937 (Clean Energy Act)**.

The 2018 Session should include efforts to increase funding for the **Clean Power Plan**. Global carbon reduction will require the opposition to the construction of fossil fuel storage and export terminals. The permits for these are controlled by the Ports, Dept. of Ecology and the EPA. However, the State Legislature might pass legislation regulating the ports or disincentives to new fossil fuel facilities.

Efforts should be made to reduce transportation emissions by encouraging the use of public transportation, legislation to reduce exhaust emissions and encouraging the use of electric vehicles.

Water resiliency bills should be encouraged for water systems to address forecasted climate related conditions of water quality or quantity for the purposes of adaptation or mitigation. The LWV supports protection of our forests that sequester carbon and protect water supplies.

Suggested Reading:

- Washington State Dept. of Ecology Climate Change: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/2012ccrs/impacts.htm>
- Economic Effects of Not Taking Action by Pamela Person: <http://lww.org/files/ClimateChangeTF>
- International Panel on Climate Change Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/srren/>
- Northwest Regional Climate Hub Assessment of Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies: <https://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Northwest%20Vulnerability%20Assessment%20Final.pdf>

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