



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WASHINGTON

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

## 2018 ISSUE PAPER – TRANSPORTATION

**2018 Session Objectives:** During the 2018 Session, the Washington State League of Women Voters (LWVWA or League) will focus on assuring that transportation projects:

- Are environmentally sound;
- Address climate change needs.

### **LWVWA Positions Statement:**

LWVWA has issued transportation position statements that support the above-stated objectives. Read together, they encourage a balanced, appropriately funded, high-capacity multi-modal transportation system. This system will serve to reduce single occupancy vehicle use. For example, LWVWA’s Transportation Position T-1 states:

“Transportation projects and programs should be prioritized to develop a balanced and seamless transportation system. Population, topography, location of transportation facilities, community livability and character, jobs/housing balance, environmental impacts, social factors, energy consumption and political realities must be considered.”

**Background:** In 2015, the Legislature adopted a sixteen-year transportation funding package. Thus, funding will be less of an issue in the 2018 Legislative Session (2018 Session) than in 2015.

### **Pending Issues for the 2018 Legislative Session**

- Oppose Legislation that would Nullify the Voters’ Approval of Sound Transit 3;
- Monitor pending proposals to fund increase electric vehicle use.

### **Oppose Legislation that would Nullify the Voters’ Approval of Sound Transit 3**

In fall 2016, voters of the three counties that comprise the Sound Transit Transportation District (District) passed a measure to fund Sound Transit 3 (ST3) through a tax increase. ST3 plans to:

- Add 62 miles of new Link light-rail line by 2036;
- Build two new stations;
- Increase Sounder commuter train service to carry more people between Seattle and Lakewood.

During the 2017 session, legislators proposed several bills to invalidate funding for ST3, even though voters approved it. Several legislators claimed that the ballot measure was misleading or that the funding was not calculated correctly, resulting in unjustified local tax increases.

### **LWVWA opposes ST3 bills that:**

- Nullify the voters’ informed approval of ST3; and
- Serve to destroy the fundamental methodology used to fund ST3 projects.

The LWVWA Transportation Position in Brief, along with T-1, stated above, support our opposition to the above-referenced bills:

“The League supports a balanced state transportation policy that defines the role of the state and supports increases in funding to provide adequate revenue, flexibility, energy efficiency and safety in a multi-modal system of transportation.”

**Pending Legislative Proposal:**

Aside from proposals that address ST3 or state funding exclusively, the Legislature's transportation committees may be presented with a proposal which primarily seeks to:

- Require that automakers make electric versions of their cars available in the Washington State market. This requirement is called the Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate (ZEV) in California.
- Provide publicly funded cost incentives for large public and private fleet owners to convert their high-polluting trucks and buses to more energy efficient vehicles. Incentives maybe based on gross vehicle weight, enabling more generous incentives for larger vehicles, to ensure efficient expenditure of state funds.
- Increase utility responsibility for achieving emission reductions in the transportation sector, consistent with state goals.

The above-stated plan serves to build the electric transportation grid. Therefore, it promotes reduction of fossil fuel emissions in the transportation sector.

This goal matches LWVWA Position T-1 (stated above) which seeks to establish environmental and community livability concerns as priorities for transportation legislation.

However, the legislative proposal in question is in its earlier stages of development and in flux. Consequently, the League will monitor the proposal's progress until it is ripe for a recommendation regarding the League's position.

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