

2019 ISSUE PAPER: CLIMATE CHANGE

Position Statement

The League of Women Voters supports a set of climate assessment criteria that ensures that energy policies align with current climate science. These criteria require that the latest climate science be used to evaluate proposed energy policies and major projects in light of the globally-agreed -upon goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees C, informed by the successful spirit of global cooperation as affirmed in the UN COP C21 Paris agreements.

The LWVWA believes that global climate change is one of the most serious threats facing our nation and planet today. Increasingly severe consequences are projected for more people and more regions of the world unless we act now—as individuals, as communities, and as a nation.

Climate change is having a significant effect on Washington State's natural and economic landscape as described by University of Washington Climate Scientists Dr. Richard Gammon and Dr. Sarah E. Myhre in their testimony before the House Environment Committee, including:

- 1) rising sea levels which threaten shorelines and cities; examples are Taholah, Neah Bay, Tacoma and Olympia's port and downtown areas
- 2) ocean acidification affecting marine life and the shellfish industry
- 3) ocean warming affecting marine life, including salmon survival
- 4) receding glaciers affecting summer water levels and temperatures in salmon bearing rivers
- 5) earlier snow melt affecting the hydrology of rivers...eroding banks and the disruption of salmon habitat in riverbeds
- 6) extreme weather events, including flooding and drought, affecting riparian habitats, agriculture, and wildfires
- 7) declining air quality, demonstrated already through the increased wildfires in the summers of 2017 and 2018

Addressing climate change impacts will require a sustained commitment to integrating climate information into legislation and government programs and services.

Summary of Issues for the 2019 Legislative Session

The failure of Initiative 1631 to pass in November 2018 impedes the State's ability to meet climate goals such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, addressing air pollution, wildfire funding, and water quality. Also impacted are coastal communities such as Taholah, Neah Bay, Tacoma, and Olympia regarding the availability of fish and orcas, as well as rising sea level.

The recent October 10, 2018, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states that the decisions made today are critical in ensuring a safe and sustainable world for everyone, both now and in the future. The LWVWA advocates measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, investments in clean energy programs, and implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies to improve forest health as well as air and water quality.

Contact Information: Phyllis Farrell, 360-789-8307, phyllisfarrell681@hotmail.com