



2024 Issue Paper: Climate Crisis and Energy

Significant LWV Positions on Climate Change and Energy

The League believes that the public has a right to know about dangers to health and the environment, pollution levels, and proposed resource management policies and options, as well as to participate in related decision-making. The League supports public education that provides a basic understanding of the environment and the social, economic, and environmental costs and benefits of environmental protection, pollution control, and conservation.¹

The LWV urges policies to *invest in renewable energy, implement a plan to put a price on carbon, and address the long-term impacts climate change has on public [health](#). Action now is critical to curb the most dramatic impacts of climate change that may occur at warming levels higher than 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels.*²

The LWV stands united with, and in support of, efforts to price carbon emissions, whether cap-and-trade, carbon tax/fee, or other viable pricing mechanisms³; and to establish incentives for efficient use of current energy sources and the greater use of alternative energy sources.⁴ State and local Leagues, and individual League members, have a critical role to play in helping to limit future climate change and protect the planet.⁵

Find the details of all [League positions](#) on the web site.

What to look for in the 2024 Washington State Legislative Session

Quarterly allowances auctions under the [Climate Commitment Act](#) (CCA) have accumulated over \$1.4 billion for investments in electrification, low-emission transportation systems, natural solutions, reducing greenhouse gases heating, and redressing environmental injustice from past energy policy with front-line communities and tribes. The opportunity in 2024 and beyond is to budget these funds to make progress on the CCA objectives, and guard against redirection of CCA funds to cover non-compliant spending.

¹ [Comments on National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\) Implementation, 9-29-23.](#)

² [LWVUS Urges Climate Action in the Senate.](#)

³ 2018 LWVUS Convention Resolution (CCA is the current carbon pricing method in WA).

⁴ [LWVWA Program in Action.](#)

⁵ <https://my.lwv.org/lwvus/position/climate-change?destination=node/14218>

New Policy for 2024

Increase energy pricing accountability through pricing transparency and controlling excessive fuel company profits. Usually states cannot regulate interstate commerce, so the approach may be collect and analyze more company information. Proprietary information must be protected. Expect the Senate to introduce perhaps 2 bills on this. This is a priority of the [Environmental Priorities Coalition](#) (EPC).

Continuing Emphasis in 2024

Bills that failed passage in 2023 can be reconsidered in the second year of the biennium, the 2024 session.

[SB 5431](#) / [HB 1368](#) Zero emission school buses. Possible language adjustments will require school buses purchased in WA after 2027 must be zero emissions, and all WA state school buses operated after 2035 be zero emission. The 2035 milestone may encounter negotiation to accommodate new-bus purchase contracts already in place. Funding in part would come from the Federal [Inflation Reduction Act](#) (IRA) of 2022. A budget proviso of \$60 million from CCA income will ensure schools can afford this investment. Anticipated benefits include reduced GHGs, healthier air around children, and reduced operating costs. Investment will be apportioned to ensure benefits target overburdened communities.

[HB 1391](#) Energy Upgrade Navigator. Bill stalled in the Senate in 2023, so It can continue with a vote on the Senate floor, but a substitute bill is anticipated for introduction in committee to increase language clarity and organization. The Navigator web tool will provide guidance for purchasing and installing energy efficiency home investments for overburdened and low-income communities to retrofit residences and buildings with energy efficiency appliances, insulation, repairs, indoor air quality improvements, and health and safety improvements. It will also provide guidance for contractors. Funding is available from the CCA and the Federal Inflation Reduction Act. A budget proviso in 2023 began development of the database. The system will collect data to improve process clarity and identify barriers. This is a climate justice focus.

Continuing Opportunities

Energy usage in buildings: greenhouse gases, energy consumption, health risks, historic and continuing inequities. Shifting from methane to heat pumps and induction cook tops requires investment, but reduces energy consumption, reduces toxic exposure, and provides a source of cooling during heat events. All Washington residents should have access to this technology. Various situations will require different approaches.

Incorporating benefits of the IRA into policy implementation. The IRA provides incentives for energy efficiency upgrades, electrification, and lower carbon building materials, so state policy should focus on incentives in other areas to maximize benefits overall.

The Situation Now

Energy policy is intertwined with climate change objectives, and climate change already affects or soon will affect nearly every aspect of life in Washington, America, and the World. Because the Federal government is slow to take decisive action on climate change, [many states](#)—including Washington—have stepped in with needed progress on environmental and energy policy.

In Washington, [climate change](#) affects farms, rivers, forests, water, shorelines, [health](#), and wildlife. We will need to mitigate the effects such as increased winter rain and earlier snow melt, summer droughts and disappearing streams, higher high temperatures and lower low temperatures. Climate-caused declining river flows plus requirements to maintain in-stream flows to maintain habitat will reduce our available hydro power in some seasons. The decisions, policies, and investments we make in **energy** and **transportation** represent the opportunities we in Washington have to do our part in reducing our contribution to the greenhouse effect.

Coalitions: the [Northwest Energy Coalition](#) and the [Environmental Priorities Coalition](#).

Issue Chair: Martin Gibbins, mgibbins@lwwa.org