

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES®

A Guide to Public Policy Positions

Climate Change Statement of Position on Climate Change Policy, as announced by the LWV National Board, January 2019:

The League's Position The League believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and our planet. The League believes that an interrelated approach to combating climate change—including through energy conservation, air pollution controls, building resilience, and promotion of renewable resources—is necessary to protect public health and defend the overall integrity of the global ecosystem. The League support climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations. Individuals, communities, and governments must continue to address this issue, while considering the ramifications of their decision, at all levels—local, state, regional, national, and global. League History In the later 2000s, LWVUS significantly increased its advocacy concerning global climate change. LWVUS believes that climate change is a serious problem that requires immediate domestic and international action. The League believes the U.S. government should move ahead immediately, without waiting for other nations, on initiatives to reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases like carbon, methane, and other air toxics. Such actions will reduce the threat of global climate change, combat air pollution, increase energy security, and create new jobs. In late 2006, the League joined other groups in issuing a statement of principles on the importance of reducing climate change. The League also created a Climate Change Task Force to provide information and assistance to the national board and staff on issues pertaining to climate change. The Task Force also works to develop materials for use by League members at the local, state, and national levels. In 2008, the League called on Congress to enact legislation to significantly cut the greenhouse gas emissions which cause global climate change and supported increased energy efficiency and a shift to clean, renewable energy. The League called for a moratorium on the building of new coal-fired electric power plants and supported requirements for utilities to produce a significant percentage of electricity from renewable resources. The League supported the Climate Security Act of 2008, as well as amendments to strengthen tbill. This legislation provided for a cap and trade system, which would have cut greenhouse gas emission from electric power, transportation, and manufacturing sources. The emissions cap would be reduced over time to meet pollution reduction goals based on the best-available scientific information. These emissions reductions could be traded on a market, set up by the legislation, allowing polluters to buy, sell, borrow, and trade emission allowances to ensure economic efficiency in the program. The League also urged elected officials to extend clean energy tax incentives. Though it passed the U.S. House of Representatives, the legislation was sidetracked in the U.S. Senate by special interests. In December 2009, the League was thrilled to participate on the international stage, sending an official non-governmental organization delegation to Copenhagen, Denmark, for the U.N.

Framework Convention on Climate Change. In March 2010, 19 League leaders from as many states were brought to Washington to lobby congressional leaders on strong climate change legislation. In addition, the Climate Change Task Force developed and promoted a Toolkit for Climate Action to assist Leagues and League members throughout the country in the fight to combat global climate change. In the late 2000s, the League lobbied vigorously for comprehensive legislation to control global climate change by setting a cap on greenhouse gas pollution and by encouraging conservation and renewable energy. As part of an education and advocacy project on climate change, six state Leagues held forums with trips by the League president to speak at public events and meet with key senators and staff. In early 2010, the LWVUS president was honored with a Sisters on the Planet Climate Leader Award by Oxfam America for the League's grassroots work on climate change. In 2012, when the EPA proposed the first-ever standards to control industrial carbon pollution from power plants, which causes global climate change and increases health problems, the League joined with its environmental and social justice allies in collecting the largest number of comments ever submitted in review of an EPA regulation. More than three million comments were submitted in support of the proposed rules for new power plants urging the EPA to take the next step and set carbon standards for existing plants. With Congress unable or unwilling to act on climate change, in 2012, the League launched an initiative to urge President Obama to use his executive authority under the Clean Air Act to control carbon pollution from both new and existing power plants, which are the largest source of industrial carbon pollution in the U.S. The League strongly urged the president to lead the world in the right direction in the face of the greatest environmental challenge of our generation: climate change. With the proposed rules on new power plants in limbo and standards for new plants not yet proposed, the League used paid advertising, action alerts, and new media tools to urge the president to get the job done. The League continued its strong advocacy on climate issues by supporting President Obama's Climate Action Plan. In addition, the League voiced support for "putting a price on carbon" to compliment the regulatory effort. By demonstrating the political saliency of the climate change issue—and the effects on public health—League ads succeeded in discouraging the senate from taking up legislation that would undermine efforts to address climate change. In the 2014-2016 biennium, the League continued work to fight climate change by supporting regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency, fighting legislation to stop or hurt progress on climate initiatives, and pushing for the full rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline. The League continued support for the EPA's Clean Power Plan and New Source Pollution Standard by participating in field hearings across the country and collecting comments from grassroots supporters in support of the regulations, all while working to fight legislation to overturn or weaken the regulations in Congress. The League strongly supported the People's Climate March in New York City and the UN Paris Agreement, which was a historic international agreement that established a commitment to reduce carbon pollution and fight climate change. Finally, the League endorsed regulations from EPA to reduce the levels of ozone in the atmosphere and regulate methane in the oil and gas sector. LWVUS joined with LWVOR to file an amicus brief in the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon in the case of Juliana et al v. United States.

Together, the brief reiterates the Leagues' support for the 21 young people from across the United States who have filed a landmark constitutional climate change lawsuit against the federal government, via the Eugene, Oregon-based organization, Our Children's Trust. In 2017 and 2018, the League opposed efforts by the 115th Congress and the Trump administration to roll back key agreements and regulations to combat climate change. This includes the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, the plan to gut the Clean Power Plan, the rollback of the clean cars standards and methane regulation, and the approval of the Keystone XL pipeline.