

THE COMMUNICATOR

LWVPA RESPONSE TO ELECTION MISINFORMATION

By Terrie E. Griffin, D. Min., M.Div., M.H.S. President, LWVPA Board of Directors



Dear League Members,

A lot is happening across our Commonwealth. In the political realm there are those who are seeking to undermine the democratic foundation upon which our voting system was established. For example, we know there continues to be voting mis-information that is causing perpetrators to commit violent acts in some communities. Our citizenry is starting to question the authenticity of the past and future outcome of our elections and procedures. [Fulton County filed a lawsuit](#) against Acting Secretary of State (SOS) Veronica Degraffenreid, over decertification of voting machines.

The concern here is the SOS does not have authority to decertify machines without re-examining the systems. PA Election code is not clear on this issue. This is a concern. [The Arizona sham election review](#) (we do not call it an audit because it has no validity) while sifting through millions of votes announced there were no significant changes to the outcome of the 2020 general election.

However, there are now calls for partisan fishing expeditions in all 50 states while local school boards and local and state officials are under attack.

Recently, the state Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee issued subpoenas requesting confidential information on all voters who participated in the 2020 general election and 2021 primary (e.g., driver's license #, social security #, etc.). Currently there are bills pending in the Legislature that would require additional information from voters in order to apply for a mail-in ballot.

The big question being posed is: **What plans are being developed by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania that address current and pending legislation and voting misinformation?**

The LWVPA has a twofold plan that involves the state board and our local Leagues working in tandem:

On September 29th, the LWVPA board passed a resolution to retain the services of the ACLU-PA. The purpose of the retainer is so the LWVPA can serve as an intervenor in the case, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, et al., v. Senator Cris Dush, et al., to block or, in the alternative, limit the disclosure of confidential, personal information of the LWVPA members and constituents.

LWVPA has the support of the LWVUS Advocacy and Litigation Department. The Communications Department of the LWVUS will coordinate all press information regarding our position and activities. FYI: The LWVPA worked with the ACLU-PA during the 2020 general election, "Trump vs. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

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THE COMMUNICATOR

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, CONTINUED

By Terrie E. Griffin, D. Min., M.Div., M.H.S. President, LWVPA Board of Directors

LWVPA is asking local Leagues to begin developing education campaign strategies to combat misleading voting activities (election review scams), voting mis-information, and other inaccurate and negative attacks on our constituents as we approach elections next month. **Please remember to check your email for news about our participation, and follow us on social media.**

With elections rapidly approaching, we have our work cut out for us. However, I'm a firm believer we will prevail. When we employ what I call "The Three C's of Action" ... commitment (being dedicated to a cause), communication (being willing to be respectful and willing to listen to sometime views other than our own) and collaboration (being willing to work together – no hidden agendas) we are more likely to succeed. We're in this together.

Thank you for your work to strengthen democracy and empower voters!

In League,

Terrie Griffin
President, League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania

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Upcoming League Events



Membership Drive Kickoff Event

Tuesday, October 5th, 2021 at 5:30 PM

Local League leaders are invited to join us to kick-off our October membership drive! Meet other local Leagues and learn best practices for increasing membership. [Register for this event here.](#)

LWVUS Training: Board Leadership

Wednesday, October 6th, 2021 at 4PM

LWVUS is offering three pre-recorded, on-demand trainings and live Q&A session (Oct. 6) for both newly elected and experienced board members of state and local Leagues. The trainings cover how Boards can most effectively conduct their work and better understand their roles. [Register here.](#)

LWVUS Field Calls

Wednesday, October 6th, 2021 at 5 PM

These bi-weekly field meetings are a space for League members to discuss key voting rights legislation of the For the People Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. This will be a space for Leagues to share their advocacy plans, discuss challenges and successes. These are resource-rich environments where all League members are welcome. [Register here.](#)

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Upcoming League Events, Continued

Equity Team Meeting

Thursday, October 7th, 2021 at 7 PM

This group is open to representatives of Local Leagues and MAL Units to support local DEI work. All local PA Leagues and MAL Units are welcome. Meets monthly. Contact equity@palwv.org for more information on the Equity Team and to receive the meeting registration link.

LWVUS National Leadership Info Session

Saturday, October 16th, 2021 at 12 PM EDT

Interested in serving on the National Board of Directors? This event will provide an overview of serving on the LWVUS Board of Directors and Nominating Committee. [Join and register here.](#)

Equity Initiative Monthly Discussion: Fall Series

Monday, October 25th, 2021 at 6 PM

League members are invited to learn more about Disability Action Month with Disability Pride and Temple University. Register in advance for this [three part monthly series here.](#)

Upcoming Events with Fair Districts PA (FDPA)

Redistricting: New Electoral Maps Coming by Year-End - Get Educated & Engaged

When: Monday, October 4th, 2021 at 7PM

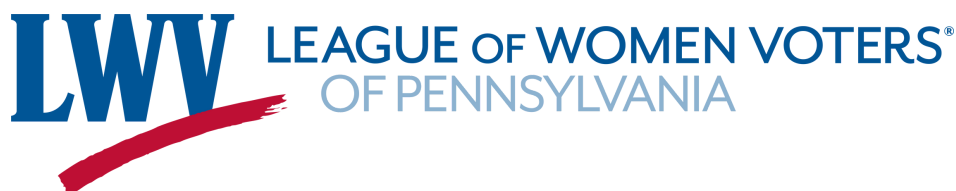
This event will explain what's happening right now with the re-mapping of our 253 state legislative and 17 Congressional electoral districts. Find out who's drawing these new maps, their timetable, their public meeting schedule and, most important, how you can engage these map-drawers via your personal testimony and maps of your own. [Register here.](#)

Mapping Mondays Open House, every Monday at 7pm

Join FDPA for a virtual mapping conversation on Monday evenings this fall. The virtual open house provides an opportunity to look at maps, ask feedback on testimony ideas, and share your own ideas about how best to map your own community. You'll be able to ask questions and share feedback with Fair Districts PA mappers and leaders. [Register Here.](#)

If you are interested in including a Local League event in the Communicator, please email events@palwv.org with the event, a brief description, and a point of contact.

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Government Policy Update

By Susan Gobreski, Director of Government Policy

CURRENT EVENTS:

PA is currently witnessing a partisan effort to try to raise doubts about the 2020 election results. It is being conducted by the Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee, being championed by people who supported overturning the 2020 election outcome and, in some cases, participated in the January 6th insurrection. Unfortunately, Senate President Jake Corman has given it his full support.

- There is no evidence that our elections were not secure; the election was overseen, reviewed and certified at multiple levels (precinct, county, state) by officials from both parties.
- [The Committee is now subpoenaing private voter information](#), including both drivers license and ID information and the last 4 digits of social security numbers for EVERY voter in the Commonwealth, which would actually make voting less secure as well as violate the privacy of voters.
- LWVPA is not referring to these efforts as [an 'audit'](#), because there is no indication that this process will follow best practices of a nonpartisan election audit. We will continue to refer to it as a partisan campaign or effort.
- LWVPA is concerned that this is being used to re-introduce restrictive procedures that create barriers to voting and civic participation. The League has been a longtime champion of voting rights and accessible elections.
- The Senate Committee has not been able to provide detailed and transparent information about the qualifications, costs, procedures of any vendor they would hire to do this partisan inquiry, nor the reporting process.

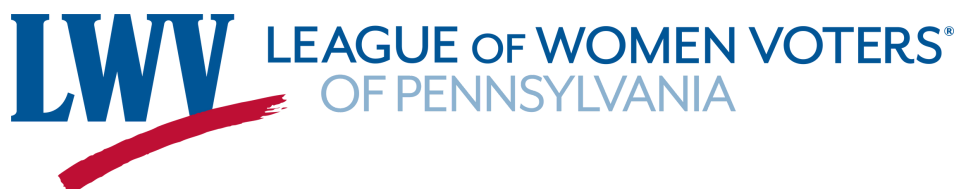
Legislation:

- State Government Committee Chair Rep Seth Grove has re-introduced a new version of HB1300, now [HB1800](#), which has many of the same issues the League [opposed in June](#). We will continue to monitor this bill, and raise our concerns and priorities as the legislation is heard. We believe that the legislation would be vetoed, so our focus will be on highlighting the problems with the bill.
- The Senate is working on [SB878](#), currently billed as a bipartisan effort to address several common ground issues. The League recently testified on this legislation - read full testimony and watch a video of the hearing [here](#). Without significant revisions, the League will not be able to support the bill, but we appreciate the efforts to find bipartisan common ground and work with counties and stakeholders to identify places to make changes that have broader support.
- [Here is a helpful article](#)

Constitutional Amendments:

- The legislature continues on a troubling path to evade the system of checks and balances to make laws, instead trying to create changes to the Constitution about basic policy matters whenever they face a veto from the Governor. To be clear, the Governor is exercising a Constitutional role when vetoing legislation.
- Our Constitution should be about protecting our rights, not policy matters or administrative procedures (like Voter ID or judicial elections). We will continue to monitor and provide our perspective.
- Current proposals include a Voter ID proposal and more are being debated in the House this week.
- There are no updates on judicial gerrymandering, but we are monitoring that as well.

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Government Policy Update Continued

By Susan Gobreski, Director of Government Policy

Legal Action:

- Numerous matters about voting policy and election laws are being litigated, including the partisan subpoena; a county that provided access to its voting machines to an outside party, and Act 77 itself.
- The League is closely following these matters and will engage directly as appropriate, continuing our role as a champion for voting rights. Please remember to check your email for news about our participation.

Take action: be a voice for voting rights!

- We need local League members to write [Letters to the Editor](#) in your local media, opposing the subpoena of private voter data, opposing the elimination of the “permanent” (which is really annual) mail ballot application; reducing access to drop-boxes; supporting opportunities for voters to “cure” (fix) their ballots for technical reasons and more. Write a letter! If you need help, reach out to the LWVPA staff, and they will help provide support so your local League can add its voice on these issues.

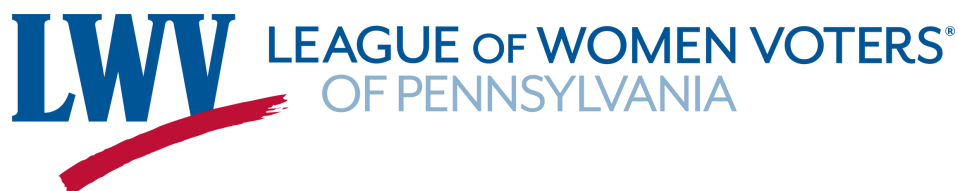
About Government Policy Committee meetings:

Sign up for our monthly calls to provide an overview of committee activities, updates, Q&A and action items! These are open meetings, designed for both interested individuals and local Leagues/liaisons who will share back to local members. Meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. [To register, click here.](#)

The Government Policy Committee is a working committee; the expectations for the committee are that members participate on a regular basis and work on projects in between meetings. Nominations can be made by local League Presidents or Policy Chairs (or the equivalent) or by application to Susan Gobreski, governmentpolicy@palwv.org. Information on expectations and participation responsibilities will be sent to interested members.

It is a very busy time for voting rights and election policy. The **best** way to receive timely updates is by following LWVPA on social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)), and checking the [news section](#) of our website.

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Social Policy Update

By Sarah Miller, Director of Social Policy

Education Funding in Pennsylvania:

On November 12, the Education Law Center, the Public Interest Law Center, and O'Melveny & Myers LLP are taking the state to court. The trial date was pushed back a month due to a medical emergency. Trial will be held in Courtroom 3002 of the Pennsylvania Judicial Center in Harrisburg. It is expected to be held five days a week and be livestreamed. Stay tuned as we announce a day for League members to show their support in person.

Broadband Access in Pennsylvania:

As the pandemic has progressed, discrepancies between Pennsylvania counties have become clearer in regard to education and to broadband access. Recent research has documented that the FCC's report of broadband access was downplaying the actual total of residents without access. 11 million broadband speed tests were conducted across the state in 2018. [The results](#): "median speeds across most areas of the state do not meet the FCC's criteria to qualify as broadband." \$2.5 million in federal funding will go to Greene County to support the area's internet connectivity. Pennsylvania has recently approved an additional four internet providers to expand broadband access to underserved areas. [HR 3684](#), if passed, will initiate more grants for broadband deployment in underserved areas.

Fall Equity Discussions:

On Monday, September 27th, the LWVPA Equity Initiative in partnership with LWV Philly offered a special Antiracism program on equitable school funding. [Watch the recording here](#). This was the first of the **FALL 2021 'SERIES OF THREE' Monday Equity Discussions**.

Equity webinars are open to all LWVPA members, volunteers, and guests who desire a more inclusive organization. They cover a wide range of equity topics. Join us next on **October 25 for Disability Action Month** with **Disability Pride and Temple University Institute on Disabilities**. [Register](#) now for this monthly series.

Meetings are held on the 4th Mondays of each month, 6 pm to 8 pm. Members are invited to read our equity shared [resources](#) and learn about past equity [topics](#).

Be part of building a more inclusive LWVPA locally and in every facet of our organization! Contact equity@palwv.org to get involved.

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Social Policy Update Continued

By Sarah Miller, Director of Social Policy

I am pleased to announce the members of the newly formed Social Policy Committee: Carol Wilkerson, Susan Boser, and Nikki Verwoerd. Contact socialpolicy@palwv.org if you are interested in joining the committee.



Carol Wilkerson is a native Atlantan, but has spent the past 20 years living in Illinois, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania. She studied English at Duke University, then earned a law degree at the University of Georgia. After 20 years of law practice Carol retired from law and attended Southern University of Illinois Edwardsville for secondary teacher certification and a Master's degree in English focused on the teaching of writing. She taught high school English for 13 years, then retired after moving to the Scranton area. Carol and her husband live in Clarks Summit, along with their adult twin sons with autism; her daughter and son-in-law live in Austin, TX.

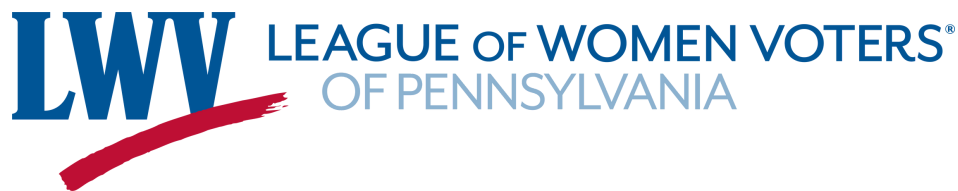


Nikki Verwoerd was born in Debar, Macedonia and moved to New York City with her family when she was 8 years old. She attended CUNY and New York University and has a career in Commercial Real Estate Management. After moving to Pennsylvania in 2019, Nikki joined the League of Women Voters Bucks County and serves on the League's communications team. She is currently enrolled in the Masters of Public Administration program at the University of Pennsylvania and lives in Warminster with her husband, 2 kids, and dog.



Susan Boser is a League member from Indiana County. Currently a professor of Sociology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Boser worked in rural human services for 20 years before completing her PhD in Policy Analysis - Human Service Studies at Cornell. Her policy interests include rural broadband access, health care and public education equity.

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Letter In Support of Equity in the Central York School District

By Jennifer Hanf, Director of Equity

LWVPA members, supporters, and partners:

Today we bear witness to a deeply divided nation and Commonwealth. Areas of disagreement extend to the COVID-19 pandemic protection measures, issues of equity and inclusion, and to voters' access to the ballot box, to name a few. Sadly, this time of discord and disharmony impacts the education of our most vulnerable, precious and important of all assets -- our children and youth. Access to education is a right and responsibility; education is the foundation of our understanding of and participation in civil society.

While most Pennsylvania public schools and school boards work to provide equity for all students, other leaders take a different approach, attempting to mandate limits to educational resources which promote understanding and equity.

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania does not support any arbitrary or discriminatory restrictions to the teaching of facts, accurate history, civics, or social policy in our schools. We deplore efforts, based on racism, fear, or bias, which are intended to silence or intimidate staff and restrict content or the works of authors. Recently, the efforts of members of the Central York Pennsylvania School Board made [national headlines](#) for banning such resources, including 250 books and other media by and about women and people of color.

Through the brave efforts of students and parents who protested, Central York School District has now reversed this decision. We commend these students and their community. We stand in support of all Pennsylvania school districts and communities as they work together to build equitable, honest, and engaging educational opportunities for their students.

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania supports educators, administrators and their important role in our democracy. We support all nonpartisan efforts to restore honest discussion and civil dialogue intended to build deeper understanding and eventual consensus around the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Our nonpartisan approach works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Hanf
Director of Equity, LWVPA

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Environmental Policy Update: Anti and Pro RGGI Bills

By Kathy Cook, Director of Environment

Senator Pittman (R) has re-introduced Senate Bill 950 from last session, which is now SB-119 and an identical bill was introduced in the House, HB 637, by Representative Struzzi (R), to delineate the process for legislative approval to impose a carbon tax on employers engaged in electric generation. If either bill becomes a law, then the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) (RGGI), a concept that Pennsylvania developed, would be stopped.

Although Pennsylvania is turning to clean energy sources and phasing out coal, planning for the future and working to repurpose, retool and revise the job structure in these communities can make these communities more resilient while helping to clean up the environment. These two bills, SB119 and HB637, ignores the successes this program has had in eleven other states and proposes no alternative solutions unlike Senator Committa's (D) and Representative Herrin's (D) pro-RGGI bills SB15 and HB1565 that outline a clear path to the future for communities that will incur job losses.

The Pro- RGGI bills would establish several funds to disburse the estimated \$300 million or more in annual revenue generated through future RGGI auctions:

- 37.5% to the Energy Communities Trust Fund
- 12.5% to the Environmental Justice Communities Trust Fund
- 46% to the Clean Air Fund

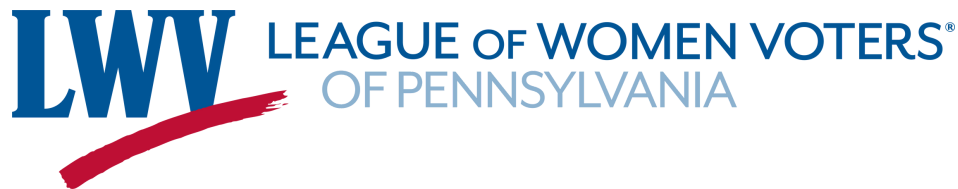
The **Energy Communities Trust Fund** will provide direct support to dislocated workers and communities experiencing impacts from the closure of existing power plants and the loss of jobs and investment. The **Environmental Justice Trust Fund** will make investments in Environmental Justice communities across the Commonwealth that are disproportionately at risk from climate impacts. The portion that goes to the **Clean Air Fund** is further broken down to 56% going to a Greenhouse Gas Abatement, Energy Efficiency, and Clean and Renewable Energy Investments Account, and the remaining 44% going to the Commercial and Industrial Energy Efficiency Account.

Funding from the Greenhouse Gas Abatement, Energy Efficiency, Clean and Renewable Energy Investments Account will support investments in carbon capture utilization and storage, abandoned oil and gas well plugging, energy efficiency, transportation, climate-smart farming practices, forest stewardship, and clean and renewable energy investments, including biomass, geothermal, hydropower, energy storage, and solar and wind technologies, all of which will help drive in-state investment and job creation.

By making these targeted investments, we can address the existential threat of climate change while also ensuring that all Pennsylvanians – from communities that form the backbone of our traditional energy economy to those currently bearing the brunt of health and safety risks associated with pollution and climate change – aren't left behind in the transition.

If your legislator is on one of the ERE committees, please contact them and ask that they do whatever they can to get SB 15 and HB 1565 voted on and through the committee.

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Fair Districts Pennsylvania (FDPA) Update: Speak Up For Fair Maps By Carol Kuniholm, Fair Districts Chair

Giving testimony is a League tradition, and this is your once-in-a-decade chance to speak up on behalf of fair maps for all.

You can give testimony on-line, or at regional or virtual hearings. Three regional hearings on Congressional redistricting have already taken place with the House State Government Committee. Five more are scheduled. The deadline to register is October 6. Written testimony must be submitted along with registration, or written testimony can be submitted alone until October 13. Find those details [here](#):

[Regional Hearing: Northcentral Tuesday, Oct. 12, 4 p.m.](#)

[Regional Hearing: Southcentral Wednesday, Oct. 13, 4 p.m.](#)

[Regional Hearing: Northeast Monday, Oct. 18, 1-5 p.m.](#)

[Regional Hearing: Southeast Tuesday, Oct. 19, 1-5 p.m.](#)

[Regional Hearing: Philadelphia Wednesday, Oct. 20, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.](#)

The Legislative Reapportionment Commission schedules hearings with little advance notice, but you can email the commission and ask to speak at contact@redistricting.state.pa.us. You can also sign up to receive alerts, or submit online comment about PA house and senate districts [here](#).

What should you say? Here are some League specific ideas:

Talk about how difficult it is to hold candidate forums when districts wander through multiple counties or towns are divided into multiple districts. Talk about how confused voters are when they find several different ballots at the same polling place. Share your story about frustrations being heard on issues of importance. Ask for districts that encourage voter engagement rather than districts that discourage participation and make voters feel their voices don't count.

Find more details and ideas in [this Fair Districts PA update](#).

While you're preparing testimony, consider a letter to the editor as well. Attention on the issue now can help ensure better maps for the next ten years. Find ideas and submission links [here](#).

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LWV Centennial Tree, The Celebration of a Milestone

By Jennifer Hanf, Director of Equity Initiative

On August 28, 2021, League members, friends, and Berks County citizens gathered in City Park, Reading, PA to finally celebrate an historic achievement with The Berks County League of Women Voters: The Centennial of The League of Women Voters and the passage of the 19th Amendment for Womens' Suffrage. For over 100 years, the League has operated as an important nonpartisan, activist, grassroots organization that believes voters should play a critical role in our democracy.

This Berks County ceremony has been a long time coming. COVID-19 altered in-person activities and plans for this event. Thus, the tree also symbolizes persistence and steadfastness, including the leaders of the LWVBC and, among them, Renee' Dietrich, a lifetime LWV member and the visionary for this event.

A tree in the heart of Berks County commemorates an extraordinary history of local advocacy and civic engagement. The Pennsylvania League was established at the same time as the National League of Women Voters. This ceremony is symbolic of our League's strong and well-established roots.

The League has, and always will, believe in the power of everyday people to create a more perfect democracy. Thank you, Renee' Dietrich, President Wenda Kincaid, and all the LWVBC leadership and membership.

Since 1920, when leaders of the women's suffrage movement founded the League, voting rights has been our vision and our mission. We continue the century-long work of the League as we move forward to embrace full equity and inclusion for all.



Left, Wenda Kincaid, President LWVBC and Renee' Dietrich, Lifetime member LWVBC and Centennial Tree Committee Inspiration

It is inspiring to know that future advocacy continues, defending democracy, the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and advocating for all voters.

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LOCAL LEAGUE SPOTLIGHT: INDIANA COUNTY



This month we are pleased to introduce you to the [League of Women Voters of Indiana County](#). They have 72 members and 6 student members. The League was first organized in 1973 because there were many citizens that were concerned that they did not have enough accurate information on candidates and issues. According to Sandy Whitson, one of the founding members and current membership chair, in 1973 two members of the State league came to Indiana county and held an organizational meeting. Seventy people attended. They discussed what the League does and she and others decided to join. The group gained official League status in 1974. Olga Platt and Susan McClure are the remainder of the founding members.

In 2021, the environmental committee, chaired by Vera Bonnet, studied and educated the public on environmental sustainability, Marcellus Shale drilling, the impact of plastic on the environment and climate change. Here is a [link to a brochure about plastics](#) written by chairwoman Bonnet. The League has also partnered with other area grassroots environmental organizations. According to their VP, Cindy Rogers, "partnering with different groups helps make connections. I know what different groups are doing and what future plans are being made so it helps the league and pairs strengths and needs."

The Indiana County League is currently working with the Evergreen Conservancy and Trex Corporation in their Bags to Benches program. Plastic bags are collected and when they collect a certain amount the bags are turned into the company and they receive a polymer lumber bench. They collect 500 pounds per bench and have collected over 3,000 pounds of plastic for 5 benches for their community. For more information on this topic is [here](#). Another active committee is their Child Advocacy Committee on Education (CACE). This committee is an extremely strong/active group and has done studies on school safety, bus exhaust, school funding, charter schools and many other topics. This group holds public education meetings and follows current legislation quite closely.

According to Sandy Whitson, the League is quite proud of the voting machine study that they did several years ago. They reported to the county commissioners and helped recommend the machines that they use to count the paper votes today. **We thank the Indiana County League for their contributions to our statewide network!**

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What Is Carbon Pricing?

By Kathy Cook, Environmental Policy Director and Don Naragon, LWV of Greater Pittsburgh

Carbon tax and cap-and-trade are BOTH carbon pricing. The [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) (RGGI) is a cap-and-trade program or cap-and-investment program. The program sets a limit on carbon emissions called an allowance, that's the cap. The cap declines 2.5% each year. The pollution allowances are auctioned to cover the polluters limits. If they pollute less, they sell the remaining allotment, if they pollute more than the allowance, they buy at auction and this is considered a trade. Like any auction, the price is determined at the time of the auction. This is an incentive for polluters to cut down on their emissions so that they don't have to pay. Each year the emissions level is lowered and the price increases. The government gets its money while decreasing emissions. This is a win-win situation.

A carbon tax sets a fixed price up front without having a clear limit on the emissions. The potential problem with this is like all taxes, no one wants more taxes. The opposition is selling the idea that RGGI is a carbon tax. They defined RGGI as a carbon tax in the beginning of the bill process and now, since they defined RGGI as a carbon tax, lawmakers must abide by this definition, even though it is incorrect! By defining it as a tax, they can use the money through the Clean Air Fund. The Clean Air Fund has specific guidelines how funds are utilized. Job retraining and environmental justice issues would not be addressed from this fund.

We have two sets of RGGI-related bills--Senate SB 119 and HB 637 are opposed to RGGI and SB 15 and HB 1565 are pro-RGGI bills. The majority party gets to choose what bills get sent through the ERE committees. The pro-RGGI bills have been stalled at this point. The anti-RGGI bill SB 119 has passed the Senate and is in the House Environmental Resources and Energy (ERE) committee.

SB 119 asserts that the General Assembly should vote on any carbon tax. The bills spell out the data/information and analysis requirements that must be presented to the legislature if the DEP wants to impose a price on carbon. These requirements are so onerous that the DEP will do nothing and not be able to put a price on carbon. If the legislature were to put a price on carbon, the legislature could designate where the monies would go. According to knowledgeable observers, this could mean that the monies would go into the General Fund, a fund that promotes oil and gas drilling/production, or it could go into any other fund of their choosing.

SB119 sponsors oppose the fact that Governor Wolf proposed the RGGI rule. The RGGI opposition is leveraging, in the event that RGGI gets approved by a veto. Approval by veto looks like the most likely scenario at this point. If SB119 gets passed this would mean that environmentally disadvantaged poor black and brown communities would once again be passed over for the help they deserve.

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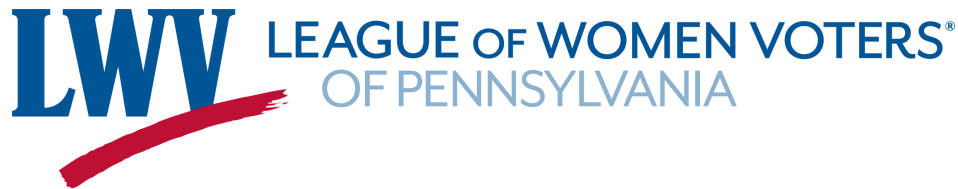


What Is Carbon Pricing, Continued

By Kathy Cook, Environmental Policy Director and Don Naragon, LWV of Greater Pittsburgh

SB 15 and HB 1565, the pro-RGGI bills presume that RGGI will be implemented and producing money streams. These bills spell out how the money will be allocated. Job training/retraining, home improvement/energy conservation projects for environmental justice communities is in their plan. Please contact your Senators and Representatives and request that they vote no on SB119/HB637 and vote yest to SB15 and HB1565. If SB119/HB637 pass, then ask your Senators and Representatives to sustain the Governor's expected veto of SB119/HB637.

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Clean Streams Law of 1937

Submitted by Jerry Walls, Lycoming MAL Unit

Clean, unpolluted streams are a right guaranteed by our Pennsylvania Constitution. The new Senate Bill 545 threatens the purity of our streams by loosening the requirements for notification of unauthorized spills of any substances/pollutants. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requires a discharger to notify them of ALL unauthorized spills of any substance, even when the quantity spilled is very small and poses no risk of harm to people or the environment. [Senate Bill 545](#) states, "as confirmed by decisions of Pennsylvania courts, the purpose of The Clean Streams Law is to regulate and control potentially harmful discharges, not to impose an impractical and unnecessary requirement on every business and individual in the Commonwealth to report every drop spilled at their facilities or homes."

However, this bill has distorted the truth. The Clean Streams Act specifically states, "the objective of the Clean Streams Law is not only to prevent further pollution of the waters of the Commonwealth, but also to reclaim and restore to a clean, unpolluted condition every stream in Pennsylvania that is presently polluted. The prevention and elimination of water pollution is recognized as being directly related to the economic future of the Commonwealth." Senate bill 545 attempts to water down the actual intent of the Clean Streams Law. Furthermore, it does not address the effects of cumulative minor spills.

The world is facing a climate crisis, water quality is in jeopardy and SB545 sends the message that individuals can cause accidental spills and not have to report them. Leaving this up to the interpretation of untrained individuals is a dangerous precedent. By not reporting spills it takes away our right to know. People who live downstream of a spill may suffer water well contamination and not even know it until their health is impacted. Spill reporting can alert them to take protective measures.

Let's look at a hypothetical example to see how SB 545 might work. ABC Corp. uses as part of its manufacturing process a chemical called Red #2, which is red dye that is not known to be toxic. In this example, there is a malfunction at ABC Corp.'s facility and a large drum containing Red #2 leaks and discharges into the local stream for hours before it is discovered. When ABC Corp. employees discover the leak, they clog up the leak, empty the rest of the leaking drum, and place absorbent boom around the location of the discharge. By this point, the waters downstream contain many visible streaks of the spilled Red #2. Downstream users include two other facilities with water intake as part of their industrial processes and a farm that takes in water for livestock.

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Clean Streams Law of 1937 Continued

Submitted by Jerry Walls, Lycoming MAL Unit

Further down, the stream flows into a pond in a popular town park. ABC Corp. then gets to evaluate if it needs to report this spill. Under SB 545, it would have to evaluate whether, under the still-to-be developed criteria, the spilled Red #2 renders the "receiving waters harmful to public health or the environment." Because Red #2 is not known to be toxic, the spill might not meet those criteria. ABC Corp. tried to address the spill with boom, so it would be entitled under SB 545 to take those measures into account when deciding whether it needs to report. ABC Corp. might decide that it doesn't meet the requirements because it took control measures and, in its evaluation, the Red #2 spill is not "harmful" to health or the environment. As a result, ABC Corp. doesn't report the spill.

The downstream industrial facilities, who don't know anything about the spill, continue to take in water from the stream, except that the water contains red dye which stains their machines and their products. The downstream farmers notice that the water is red and don't want to risk giving it to their livestock, so instead they expend resources buying water from offsite. The town pond ends up with red streaks through it, and with no information about what the red streaks are, town officials close off the park to all residents for weeks, taking away a popular outdoor amenity. Many of these downstream users or the general public will contact DEP in a panic and DEP will also have no knowledge of this spill and will be unable to alleviate concerns.

In this hypothetical scenario, ABC Corp. is not a bad actor. A malfunction happened, and when ABC Corp. realized that it had a spill it took appropriate action to address it. However, what SB 545 means is that the downstream users might never be notified of the spill. As a result, the downstream users - industrial, agricultural, and residential, all of whom have as much right to clean water as ABC Corp. does - bear the brunt of the risk and the loss. Imagine now the increased and unnecessary damages resulting from the sheer amount of time it could take for the discharger to undertake its analysis should it ultimately conclude that the pollution is "harmful." The risk could be even greater when there is a bad actor at play putting harmful contaminants in our waters.

Our President Terrie Griffin has already signed a letter opposing SB 545. I urge all our leagues to read and discuss this bill. Please call your State legislators and tell them SB 545 is a bill that does not help our environment. Also, I encourage our members to send letters to the editor to help educate the public about this dangerous bill.

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