

2020 ISSUE PAPER: CLIMATE CHANGE

Position Statement

The League of Women Voters of the United States 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.”

Global climate change is one of the most **serious threats** facing our nation and our 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. For its part, the League is calling for prompt action to cut this country’s GHG emissions, invest in a clean energy economy, and help the world’s poorest countries tackle the challenges of climate change. In Washington State, Climate Change is having a significant effect on our natural and economic landscape which is affecting public health. Addressing climate change impacts will require a sustained commitment to integrating climate information into legislation and government programs and services.

Effects of Climate Change in Washington State:

Climate change is bringing significant changes to **Washington State’s** natural and economic landscape:

- 1) Ocean warming affecting marine life, including salmon survival
- 2) Rising sea levels which threaten shorelines and cities
- 3) Ocean acidification affecting marine life and the shellfish industry
- 4) Extreme weather events, including flooding and drought, affecting riparian habitats, agriculture and wildfires
- 5) Receding glaciers affecting summer water levels and temperatures in salmon bearing rivers
- 6) Earlier snow melt affecting the hydrology of rivers...eroding banks and the disruption of salmon habitat in riverbeds, and
- 7) Declining air quality, affecting public health (This was especially evident in the summers of 2017 and 2018!)

In 2019, the Legislature passed an unprecedented amount of climate legislation including a Clean Energy Bill, the Clean Buildings Standards bill, the Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions bill, the Advancing Green Transportation bill, the Appliance Efficiency Standards bill and the Solar Fairness Act.

Summary of Issues for the 2020 Legislative Session

The LWVWA supports measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, put a price on carbon, and enact measures to promote climate resiliency.

Priorities for 2020 include a bill to align Washington’s Greenhouse Gas Emission reductions with best available science and the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, a Clean Fuel Standards bill, a bill to promote sustainable agriculture practices reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and environmental justice bills addressing environmental health disparities.

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