



2021 Issue Paper: Energy

Position Statement

For a number of years the LWV of Washington priority on energy has been protecting the state's Energy Independence Act (EIA), I-937, which passed in 2006. The act ensures that large utilities obtain 15% of their electricity from nontraditional renewable energy sources by 2020. Nontraditional sources include renewable sources such as solar, wind, or biomass energy. Hydropower produced by an already existing facility is not included, but hydropower from a project completed after March 31, 1999, was included. This act terminates in 2020.

The [LWVWA Program in Action 2019-2021](#) has the following position statements on energy:

Clean, renewable energy:

- **EN-6:** Encourage the use of renewable energy systems, such as solar and wind, and recovery of energy from biowastes.

Energy efficiency:

- **EN-2:** State governments should articulate a new energy ethic based on conservation through promoting thermal efficiency in buildings and residences.

Clean fuels:

- **EN-2:** State governments should articulate energy conservation methods.
- **AQ-1:** Coordinated action by all levels of government to control, limit, and reduce air pollution.

Progress Made in the 2019-2020 Legislative Sessions

- In the 2019 session, major progress was made with the passage of [SB 5116](#), the 100% clean energy bill that mandates all electricity sold in the state come from renewable wind, solar, geothermal, or hydropower by 2045. In addition, two important energy efficiency bills were passed to improve efficiency in buildings ([E3SHB 1257](#)) and appliances ([2SHB 1444](#)).
- Washington State's largest source of carbon emissions and air pollution is the transportation sector's use of gasoline and diesel fuels. The legislature also passed [HB 1512](#) in 2019, a transportation electrification bill incentivizing electric vehicle purchases and encouraging charging infrastructure, and passed [SB 5223](#) improving fairness in solar electricity net metering.
- In the 2020 session, the legislature passed bills to encourage the transition to zero-emission vehicles (ZEV), encourage the reliability of electricity during the transition, and a

bill encouraging reliable pumped storage to smooth out electricity generation supply and demand.

The Department of Commerce is currently updating the [State Energy Strategy for 2021](#) to comply with the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) to reach 100% clean electricity by 2045.

Opportunities for the 2021 Legislative Session and Beyond

This session, we expect the legislature will focus primarily on recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic challenges, so will lack the time for as much emphasis on climate change as in recent years. Current indications suggest that importance on a clean fuels bill and preserving funding will continue. The LWVWA supports measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, put a price on carbon, and enact measures to promote climate resiliency.

Goals and opportunities remaining for future sessions include:

- A clean fuel standard to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in transportation.
- A carbon cap and trade program or other price on carbon acceptable to legislators and voters.
- Since transportation fuels are responsible for half of our climate and air pollution, a clean fuel standard would help provide Washingtonians with more options for cleaner fuels that support local economic development in rural communities, improve public health, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our leading source of climate pollution.

Additional priorities introduced in previous sessions include:

- Pressing the federal government for a permanent nuclear waste repository.
- Prohibiting off-shore oil extraction.

For dam removal, hydropower, and salmon, see the *Rivers Issue Paper*.

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