



July 31, 2020

Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes
Members of the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change
Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy
101 E. Wilson St.
Madison, WI 53703

The League of Women Voters appreciates the Governor's Executive Orders 32 and 52, relating to the Climate Crisis. The leadership of the Governor and Lt. Governor is moving Wisconsin forward by directly addressing the Climate Emergency unfolding before us.

The League believes that climate change is a serious threat to our nation and planet. The League believes an interrelated approach to combat climate change -- including energy conservation, air pollution controls, constructing resilient infrastructure and buildings, and promotion of renewable resources -- is necessary to protect public health and defend the overall integrity of the global ecosystem. The League supports climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable livable 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.¹

The Wisconsin League undertook an extensive study of our energy sources and the impacts and mitigation of climate change in 2006-2007 resulting in significant updates to our Energy positions.² The early 2000 reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identified that achieving carbon neutrality requires reducing global levels to 350 ppm CO₂ (parts per million carbon dioxide). The U.S. has yet to act upon these scientists' warnings in a meaningful way. The 2018 IPCC report states we maybe have 12 years to turn Climate Change around.

Now we are challenged to repair not just one but three intersecting vulnerabilities: Climate Change, the public health emergency of COVID-19 and Systemic Racism.³ It will take bold and equitable actions to succeed.

¹Restated 2019 LWW on Climate Change page 63 of 2018-2020 LWWUS Impact on Issues

² June 2007 LWWVI adopted revised Energy position

³ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy LWWUS website and revised 1989 Meeting Basic Human Needs page 82 of 2018-2020 LWWUS Impact on Issues

The League believes that making democracy work is key to developing and implementing solutions to these three challenges and that all Wisconsin citizens must be empowered to take part. To this end, assuring access to and the integrity of one person one vote, Fair Maps reforms, and equitable access to education, health care, and security of food and shelter are necessary. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to our current and future success in engaging vulnerable, underserved and underrepresented individuals and communities as part of our economic, climate and public health recovery.

To reduce greenhouse gas (GHG), especially CO₂, emissions we need to focus. CO₂ comes primarily from burning fossil fuels, such as coal, petroleum products, bitumen products extracted from tar sands, natural (fossil) gas, and burning of forests (deforestation). The major sector sources are electricity generation, food-agriculture-land use, industry, transportation, buildings and other. The following are recommendations of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin jointly prepared with the LWV of Dane County to focus on these major sector sources.

- 1) **Wisconsin needs to move to a clean renewable energy economy and stop sending \$12 billion per year out of state to import dirty fossil fuels.**
 - a) Close all coal-fired electric generating facilities by 2035 or sooner and phase out all natural (fossil) gas electric generating and peaking facilities as soon as possible. As fossil fuel is removed from electric generation, we can confidently electrify every possible energy use.
 - b) Put a moratorium on the building and extension of all oil and gas fossil fuel infrastructure in Wisconsin and shut down the problematic Enbridge Line 5 Oil & Gas pipeline.
 - c) Affirm the legality of third party financed distributed energy resources to provide equitable access to renewable energy benefits and remove barriers to expanding renewable energy.

- 2) **Wisconsin needs to require climate resilient infrastructure and economic development that fully uses clean electricity. Wisconsin needs to adopt the most advanced standards for conservation and energy efficiency,⁴ reduce use and emission of GHG and toxic chemicals to incentivize closed loop/circular economies⁵ that aim for zero solid and hazardous waste and zero food waste.⁶**
 - a) **Buildings**
 - i) Adopt advanced high performance, Zero Energy state building codes and streamline state adoption of climate resilient building and appliance codes for the future. (For instance, see International Energy Conservation Code.)
 - ii) Identify and promote clean energy alternatives for propane dependent rural housing and commercial buildings.

⁴ 1975 LWVUS Energy positions and subsequent elaboration of details, p.53 top right of 2018-2020 LWVUS Impact on Issues

⁵ June 2009 LWVWI Position; and p.47 of 2007-2009 LWVWI Position Papers, air positions and actions at state and national levels by LWV on banning or limiting use of air-born toxins. See also air, energy, and waste positions p. 51-53 in 2014-2016 LWVUS Impact on Issues and p.58-60 of 2018-20LWVUS Impact on Issues

⁶ Support of “cradle to grave” and “zero discharge of toxic substances” positions p. 52 of 2007-09 LWVWI Position Papers taken under both LWVUS and LWVWI Solid Waste positions, annotated above.

- iii) Increase Focus on Energy incentives to owners and/or buyers to retrofit and make energy efficiency upgrades at the point of sale for residential and commercial buildings to reduce energy use and improve the energy ratings of the built environment.
 - iv) Direct Focus on Energy to target weatherization and retrofitting of low-income housing and older housing with outdated wiring and limited insulation.
 - v) Incentivize green roofs (for cooling and capture of precipitation) and “living buildings” (that reuse water and heat in the building).
 - vi) Incentivize replacement of building materials that are energy intensive or emit toxic and GHG gases with wood and other innovative climate friendly building products made from recycled and grown materials.
 - vii) Require the phase out of commercial refrigerants using the potent greenhouse gas HFCs, hydrofluorocarbons and that appliance leaks be repaired and responsible disposal of HFCs be required. The state should also support a federal and international ban on HFCs similar to the international 1987 Montreal Protocol under which 197 countries phased out all use of chlorofluorocarbons CFCs and successfully restored the Ozone Hole.
- b) **Transportation and Transit:** Expanding use of clean electricity in all forms of transportation reduces toxic and GHG emissions that are directly related to asthma and other lung disease.
- i) Invest in a network of EV charging stations to incentivize the adoption of electric vehicles (EV) for fleets, trucks, buses, trains and by households.
 - ii) Reform transportation funding policy to prioritize:
 - (1) “Fix It First” rather than uneconomic investments in new highways
 - (2) Remove the vehicle registration penalty on hybrid and EV vehicles
 - (3) Provide EV vehicles and EV charging stations for community ride sharing programs in low-income areas.
 - (4) Reduce vehicle miles traveled VMT by expanding access to transit and building compact land uses that provide walkable, bikeable neighborhoods that can meet most grocery, health care, education and employment needs and avoid sprawl that consumes working agricultural, forests and conservancy lands and resources and reduces free ecosystem services.
 - (5) Authorize municipalities to use sales tax and other revenue sources for joint transit projects, particularly to benefit underserved communities with improved connections to essential healthcare, groceries and places of employment and education. (Note: advanced planning already exists for joint transit projects for Ashland-Bayfield area, Chippewa Valley, Fox Valley, Greater Milwaukee, Racine & Kenosha connections with Milwaukee, and Dane County region with expansion concept to Janesville & Beloit.)
 - iii) Reinvigorate the historically important role of passenger and freight railroads in Wisconsin and use electricity as the fuel.
 - (1) Support expansion of the popular, economically successful Hiawatha commuter train by adding more trips to Chicago and charging WisDOT to reevaluate the shelved plans to extend the Hiawatha north through the Fox Valley to Green Bay.
 - (2) Charge WisDOT to seek federal infrastructure funding for a second Amtrak route between Minneapolis and Milwaukee/Chicago and a commuter train connecting Wisconsin cities (Eau Claire, LaCrosse, Madison, Watertown) between Minneapolis and

Milwaukee. (Note: both plans were developed and should still be on the shelves or archives of WisDOT)

- c) **Manufacturing** is a major sector for employment and has long been an economic driver in Wisconsin.
 - i) Create the Workforce for the Future in partnership with industries, Technical Colleges, and community-sponsored work force development training and apprenticeship programs.
 - ii) Incentivize production that eliminates toxic chemicals in processes and use of raw materials to ensure fully reusable or recyclable products.
 - iii) Incentivize reduced use and manufacture of plastics, a petroleum product that creates waste that does not biodegrade. Waste plastic builds up in oceans and landfills, producing highly mobile microplastics that distribute throughout the biosphere and cause diseases.
 - iv) Support a federal ban on single use plastics.
 - d) **Focus on Energy**
 - i) Wisconsin needs to dramatically expand the cost-effective and successful Focus on Energy program. For every \$1 of program costs, Focus generates \$3 in direct economic value.
 - ii) Focus educates and brings conservation and energy efficiency products and services directly to consumers, farmers, small and large businesses, and industries while encouraging small business growth.
 - e) **Developing a Skilled Workforce and Meeting Basic Human Needs:**
 - i) Focus on Energy and the Wisconsin system of Technical Colleges have demonstrated their ability to train workers with skills for the growing number of clean energy jobs -- installing and maintaining energy conservation projects, energy efficiency projects, wind turbines, and solar arrays.
 - ii) Investments such as expanding the extent of coverage of high-speed broadband communications, workforce training, infrastructure resilience projects, and small business growth offer many opportunities to address basic human needs and strengthen local communities of color and the vulnerable populations of low-income and disabled in our state. Invest strategically in housing and food security, public health, education, mental and physical health care, clean air and water improvements, accessible transit, and entrepreneurship to improve the quality of life of all Wisconsin residents.
- 3) Wisconsin needs to lead with its natural resource strengths – a landscape of fertile farm fields, forests, wetlands and prairies – to maximize natural carbon sequestration and protect our clean water resources.**
- a) Facilitate marketable carbon credits with certification of practices and measurement protocols and expand conservation easement programs to authorize longevity of the carbon credits.
 - b) Strengthen green infrastructure standards to capture the first 0.5 to 1 inch of rainfall to infiltrate precipitation from normal and extreme weather events and provide additional free ecosystem services in rural, suburban, and urban areas.
 - c) Support regenerative agricultural practices that build healthy soils for nutritious food, improve water quality, and increase carbon sequestration.

- d) Support silviculture programs that increase numbers of urban and suburban climate-resilient diverse tree species whose canopies increase shade, moderate heat island effects, purify the air, and increase sequestration of carbon.
 - e) Support silviculture practices that help standing trees to live longer for increased carbon sequestration, improved water quality and habitat, and marketable construction products.
 - f) Support and invest in silvicultural practices that yield healthy and diverse species of trees that are climate resilient. Forests and trees provide a wide variety of free ecosystem services that support wildlife, fisheries and bird habitat and increase carbon sequestration.
 - g) Promote behavioral changes beneficial to addressing climate change. For example, education efforts to promote a human diet based more on plants and less on meat and dairy.
 - h) Promote animal grazing programs and programs to diversify land management and crop production.
 - i) Charge DATCP with helping to move the Dairy industry away from confined animal feeding operations.
 - j) Aggressively expand and fund DATCP working lands programs to protect productive crop producing fields from suburbanization and to conserve forests, habitat, water resources and conservancy lands.
- 4) Wisconsin needs a price on carbon emissions to put the market to work to decrease demand for fossil fuels and to make alternatives more affordable.⁷**
- a) The League is neutral on whether this market should be cap and trade, carbon tax/fee or other viable pricing mechanisms. The League recommends that Wisconsin choose based on the effectiveness to successfully implement and achieve emission abatement, the goal of pricing.
 - b) Existing robust carbon markets include: Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in nine northeastern states since 2008 and in California since 2012. At one time Wisconsin participated in consideration of a Midwest GHG market.
 - c) Assist agriculture and industry to use the selected market or let them choose markets themselves.
- 5) Wisconsin needs to support the many climate mitigation efforts of local municipal and county governments and the local and regional public agencies that serve these communities.**
- a) The Governor's Task Force on CC presented the Urban Footprint software on June 4, 2020⁸. LWVDC is familiar with Urban Footprint software and endorses its use across Wisconsin. The City of Madison acquired an Urban Footprint license to develop *Imagine Madison Plan for Transportation and Land Use*. The Capital Area Regional Planning Commission used Urban Footprint software to offer the public for future scenarios. Interestingly, the extensive county-wide public survey responses to *A Greater Madison Vision* favored resilient Climate Change strategies.
 - b) Purchase a state-wide license for the Urban Footprint analytical platform to facilitate its use broadly in the state and support training, analysis, projects and implementation by local governments and regional agencies for land use, transportation, energy, economic development, housing and infrastructure as required by the WI Smart Growth law.

⁷ LWVUS Carbon Pricing policy, p. 44 Bottom right next to last paragraph, 2014-16 LWVUS Impact of Issues and Carbon Pricing resources on the LWVUS website: Toolkit for Climate Action

⁸ <https://climatechange.wi.gov/Documents/HCSE%20Subcommittee%20Meetings/GTFCC%20-%20HCSE%20Urban%20Footprint%20060420.pdf>

- c) Offer grants for joint public-private projects based on Urban Footprint regional analyses of climate change stressors and recommended strategies for behavioral change, mitigation and adaptation.

We are all one community when it comes to Climate Change and as such individuals, businesses and all levels of government must step up. Success depends upon our collective actions.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute these recommendations to the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change. For further questions or clarifications, please contact Caryl Terrell at 608.256.0827.

Sincerely,

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