

Attachment A

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS POSITIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCES

(Information taken from LWV of New York State {LWVNYS} web site: www.lwvnys.org; material also contained in LWVUS publication, Impact on Issues 1998-2000) *Go to LWVNYS web site*

NATURAL RESOURCES POSITION

Protecting Our Natural Resources (affirmed by the 1986 Convention, based on positions reached from 1958 through 1986; reaffirmed at succeeding biennial conventions)

Position in brief:

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health.

Public Participation

Position in brief:

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

TIME LINE, NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

Our Natural Resources positions date back to the 1920s and 1930s, an interest in conservation of natural resources and a study of Muscle Shoals and the Tennessee Valley Authority. A nationwide League study of water resources (1956-58) began the building of a broad national program aiming at protecting and managing the unique aspects of air, energy, land use, waste management and water. In 1986, recognizing the interrelationships of the Natural Resources positions, the League regrouped the five categories to emphasize three common themes: resource management, pollution control and public participation.

Following is a list of pertinent positions to the issue at hand, arrived at in national League conventions or councils.

- 1950s - conservation emphasized after first Hoover Commission recommended improved "efficiency in the development and use of natural resources"
- 1956-58 water resources study;
- 1958 water resources position; rephrased and expanded 1960
- 1960s - efforts to pass legislation to check deterioration of land, air and water resources
- 1970 air pollution, position for control of air emissions;
Clean Air Act passed. League pushed for full implementation and expansion
- 1970 authorized study of solid waste disposal (focused attention on reuse and recycling)
- 1972 authorized three-year study of land use: how to achieve balance between human needs and environmental quality
- 1975 position on land use
- 1975 position supporting energy conservation as national policy
- 1976 two victories on hazardous waste: Resource Conservation and Recovery (RCRA);
Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA)
- 1976 authorized study to "evaluate sources of energy and the government's role in meeting future needs"
- 1978 broad position on energy policies and sources (including conservation)
- 1979 extend application of energy position to nuclear energy
- 1980 pushed passage of Low-Level Waste Policy Act
- 1982 pushed passage of Nuclear Waste Policy Act
- 1986 regrouped Natural Resources positions into three major interrelated categories
- 1986 passage of Safe Drinking Water Act

1987 passage of Clean Water Act

1990 efforts for environment rewarded as improved Clear Air Act addresses acid rain, smog and toxic emissions

1991-94 promoted "reduce, reuse, recycle", urging reauthorization of RCRA;

pushed for bottle bill, recycled fiber in newspaper

1992 support for global cooperation presented at the Rio "Earth Summit"

1992 and 1995 agreements between LWV Education Fund (LWVEF) and DOE; citizen education, defense waste issues

1994-2000 fighting efforts in Congress to dismantle the regulatory framework safeguarding the environment and public health

1995-2000 opposing congressional efforts to designate Yucca Mountain, Nevada as a repository for nuclear waste before suitability studies completed

1996 LWVEF asked by Department of Energy (DOE) to convene a National Dialogue on Nuclear Material and Waste

1997-98 rejected antiregulatory legislation passed by 104th Congress;
supported EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)

1997-2000 urging members of the Senate and the House to oppose the Nuclear Waste Policy Act which would mandate an interim storage site at Yucca Mountain

1998 Inter-Site Discussions/National Workshops held in San Diego and Chicago;

LWVEF made following recommendations:

- 1) Workshops affirmed a need for ongoing education and dialogue. The Secretary of Energy should initiate a National Dialogue on Nuclear Material and Waste.
- 2) The Secretary should develop a national strategy for management of nuclear material and waste that incorporates all locations and opinions. Congress must back this national strategy with long-term funding to carry it out.

Partial list of LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS POSITIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCES, as they relate to NRC's draft policy statement on West Valley

Environmental Protection and Pollution Control

Land Use

- management of land as a finite resource not as a commodity, since land ownership, whether public or private, carries responsibility for stewardship;
- land-use planning that reflects conservation and wise management of resources (identification and regulation of areas of critical concern);
- fragile or historical lands (such as shorelands of river, lakes and streams, estuaries and bays; rare or valuable ecosystems and geological formations; significant wildlife habitats; unique scenic or historic areas; wetlands; deserts);
- renewable resource lands (such as watersheds, aquifers and aquifer recharge areas, significant agricultural and grazing lands, forest lands);
- natural hazard lands (such as floodplains, areas with high seismic or volcanic activity, areas of unstable geologic, ice or snow formations);
- reclamation of lands damaged by surface mining, waste disposal, overgrazing, timber harvesting, farming and other activities;
- acquisition of land for public use;
- identification and regulation of areas impacted by public or private investment where siting results in secondary environmental and socioeconomic impacts;
- conformance of federal land resource activities with approved state programs, particularly where state standards are more stringent than federal.

Waste Management

The League supports:

- policies to ensure safe treatment, transportation, storage and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes in order to protect public health and air, water and land resources;
- policies for the management of civilian and military high- and low-level radioactive wastes to protect public health, and air, water and land resources;
- the establishment of processes for effective involvement of state and local governments and citizens in siting proposals for treatment, storage, disposal and transportation of radioactive wastes;
- full environmental review of treatment, storage and disposal facilities for radioactive wastes;
- safe transport, storage and disposal of radioactive wastes.

Water... Water Resources

The League supports:

- water resource programs and policies that reflect the interrelationships of water quality, water quantity, groundwater and surface water and that
- address the potential depletion or pollution of water supplies;
- measures to reduce water pollution from direct point-source discharges and from indirect nonpoint sources.
- policies to achieve water quality essential for maintaining species diversity and populations of aquatic species, including measures to protect lakes, estuaries, wetlands and in-stream flows;
- stringent controls to protect the quality of current and potential drinking-water supplies, including protection of watersheds for surface supplies and of recharge areas for groundwater.

Air... Air quality

The League supports:

- regulation and reduction of pollution from stationary sources;
- regulation and reduction of ambient toxic-air pollutants;
- measures to reduce transboundary air pollutants.