



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup>**  
**OF WISCONSIN, INC.**

122 State Street, #405  
Madison, WI 53703-2500

Phone: (608) 256-0827  
Fax: (608) 256-1761

<http://www.lwwwi.org>  
[lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.org](mailto:lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.org)

**Revised Position: Natural Resources/Energy**  
*Adopted at 60<sup>th</sup> Convention, Green Bay, June 16, 2007*

## **Energy**

### *Global Warming*

Global warming threatens the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems as well as the economic, social, public health, and even the survival of the populations of the Earth. To stop global warming requires stabilizing atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> before the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century at less than double the pre-industrial concentration.

### **Support of:**

#### **Accepting our responsibilities as global citizens to stop global warming**

**Urging use by the State of Wisconsin, municipalities, individuals and corporations/businesses to use existing technologies to:**

- a. Make power plants, buildings and factories more efficient;**
- b. Make motor vehicles go farther on each unit of fuel; and**
- c. Shift to cleaner technologies.**

**Urging Federal leadership to adopt nationwide global warming pollutant reductions of at least 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, the levels of reductions of CO<sub>2</sub> from the 1990 level that United Nations scientists say are needed.**

**Providing assistance to those harshly affected by global warming, especially low-income individuals and families.**

### *Electric Energy*

The following electric energy positions reinforce and implement the position on global warming. They expand the previous energy positions and integrate them with new positions on siting of power plants and transmission lines, restrictions on fossil fuels and natural gas, and on electric energy planning and regulation.

### **Support of:**

#### **1. Limiting the demand for electricity**

Success depends on all entities (governments, corporations and shareholders, individuals) taking responsibility for their consumption and contributing to energy self-reliance.

- a. Reduce the use of electricity through a wide range of programs that promote conservation (behavioral change), energy efficiencies (using energy with fewer overall resources), co-generation\* and distributed generation.

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\*Co-generation: simultaneously generating electricity and usable waste heat

- b. Use voluntary and regulatory energy demand management strategies.
- c. Include rate structures and pricing strategies, such as peak demand, that incorporate the true cost of energy, which is not reflected in the current market system.

## **2. Financial incentives to advance clean energy technologies**

Increase funding and grants for technology transfer, research and development of new fuel sources, and improved methods to reduce polluting effects of energy production. Government, industry and other private sources should invest in such efforts with safeguards against conflict of interest. We support making tax incentives available on a sustained basis until new technologies are established and competitive.

## **3. Siting of power plants, transmission lines and natural gas pipelines**

The process for evaluating the suitability of new proposed power plants, electric transmission lines and natural gas pipelines should include:

- a. Ample and effective opportunities for informed participation by all affected governments and the public in the formulation and analysis of proposed projects;
- b. Procedures for resolution of intergovernmental conflicts, including between states and the Regional Transmission Operator as well as with Canada in accord with international treaties;
- c. Examination of all short- and long-term economic costs including, but not limited to, construction, delivery, operation, maintenance and impacts on price, supply and demand;
- d. Evaluation of economic, social, environmental and aesthetic impacts in electricity generation area, the receiving area and any area through which the transmission line or pipeline must pass;
- e. Routing any new transmission lines or pipelines along existing transportation and utility corridors, to the greatest extent possible;
- f. Ensuring all infrastructure is constructed and maintained in an environmentally sensitive and safe manner
- g. Protection of sensitive on-shore and off-shore public lands and prohibition of drilling in and around the Great Lakes
- h. Limited use of Wisconsin lake and river shoreline for power plant sites
- i. Standards for thermal effluent limitations that protect background water temperature and overall surface water quality; policies that prohibit once-through cooling systems.

Note: Further positions and guidelines affecting the siting process are under Land.

## **4. Restrictions on fossil fuels**

Aggressively reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to stop global warming requires de-carbonizing energy sources and storing carbon biologically or geologically.

- a. Coal. The LWVWI supports prohibition on any new coal-fired plant, or any existing plant being rebuilt, unless it is equipped to:
  - i. Co-fire renewable fuels
  - ii. Capture usable steam for co-generation \*
  - iii. Integrate gasification and combined cycle technology
  - iv. Capture carbon using the best available control technology
  - v. Sequester carbon using the best available control technology
- b. Natural Gas. The LWVWI supports:
  - i. Promotion of maximum use of energy efficiencies and renewables to conserve use of natural gas
  - ii. Capture of usable steam for co-generation

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\*Co-generation: simultaneously generating electricity and usable waste heat

- iii. Advocating that imports of natural gas do not come from environmentally sensitive areas or from countries without adequate environmental safeguards

## **5. Restrictions on nuclear power**

The LWVUS recognizes nuclear power as a part of the nation's energy mix, but it opposes reliance on nuclear fission. More specifically, the LWVWI, within LWVUS guidelines, supports:

- a. Prohibition of further licensing and construction of nuclear fission reactors until scientific questions regarding their effects upon public health and safety can be resolved;
- b. Stringent radioactive effluent release standards throughout the nuclear cycle (production, transport, use, on-site or interim storage, decommissioning, long-term storage and reprocessing) for maximum protection of both the environment and public health and safety.

## **6. Electric energy planning**

The Public Service Commission (PSC), acting under the Legislature and the Governor, is the primary energy planner in the state. The LWVWI supports the following requirements for electric energy planning:

- a. The LWVUS Natural Resources positions for resource management decisions and comprehensive long-range planning;
- b. A planning timeframe of not less than 20 years, with review and update of strategy options and specific proposals on a regular basis.
- c. Integration of PSC plans with those of Wisconsin utilities and reflection of these in the plans of the Regional Transmission Operator
- d. Policy makers taking into account the global impacts of their decisions.
- e. Sustained and integrated involvement of the public and affected government involvement in all aspects of formulation and analysis of energy policy
- f. Requirement of the PSC and other statewide energy planners to continually provide the public with information about electric energy, the policies and priorities that govern the use of electricity, the energy industry and the significant energy issues currently under consideration.

## **7. Regulation of public utilities**

The provision of electric power is an essential social and economic need. It is vital to the public interest and common good. As such it has historically been highly regulated by the government. The LWVWI supports:

- a. Continued regulation of public utilities;
- b. Regulation of utilities that is fair, open, transparent and accessible to the public in all of its proceedings. Accurate comprehensive information must be available to consumers for educational and decision making purposes;
- c. A strengthened PSC with adequate funding and staffing to assure good decision-making and the ability to fulfill statutory responsibilities.
- d. An independent regulatory process free from undue political and utility influence;
- e. A minimum of a two-year waiting period before a commissioner or high level staff of the PSC can be hired by a utility.

Note: Further positions and guidelines affecting Energy are under LWVUS Energy.