

## **LWVUS Fracking-related Positions**

### **Natural Resources: The League's Position**

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.

(LWVUS, Impact on Issues, page 41)

### **Environmental Protection and Pollution Control: The League's Position**

The League supports the preservation of the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem and maximum protection of public health and the environment. The League's approach to environmental protection and pollution control is one of problem solving. The interrelationships of air, water and land resources should be recognized in designing environmental safeguards. The League's environmental protection and antipollution goals aim to prevent ecological degradation and to reduce and control pollutants before they go down the sewer, up the chimney or into the landfill.

The League believes that although environmental protection and pollution control are responsibilities shared by all levels of government, it is essential that the federal government provide leadership and technical and financial assistance.

The federal government should have the major role in setting standards for environmental protection and pollution control. Other levels of government should have the right to set more stringent standards. Enforcement should be carried out at the lower levels of government, but the federal government should enforce standards if other levels of government do not meet this responsibility. Standards must be enforced in a timely, consistent and equitable manner for all violators in all parts of society, including governmental units, industry, business and individuals.

Environmental protection and pollution control, including waste management, should be considered a cost of providing a product or service. Consumers, taxpayers and ratepayers must expect to pay some of the costs. The League supports policies that accelerate pollution control, including federal financial assistance for state and local programs.

The League supports:

- regulation of pollution sources by control and penalties;
- inspection and monitoring;
- full disclosure of pollution data;

- incentives to accelerate pollution control;
- vigorous enforcement mechanisms, including sanctions for states and localities that do not comply with federal standards and substantial fines for noncompliance.

### **Further Guidelines and Criteria: Water Resources: The League supports:**

- water resource programs and policies that reflect the interrelationships of water quality, water quantity, ground-water 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 populations and diversity, 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.

(LWVUS, Impact on Issues, Page 47)

Convention 2010 agreed that “fracking,” where high pressure water is pumped underground to fracture geologic formations in order to release natural gas, poses a threat to drinking water and other water resources. State Leagues took the lead in working to block these mining processes that release contaminated and polluted waters. (LWVUS, Impact on Issues, Page 46)

### **Public Participation: The League’s Position**

The League believes that public understanding and cooperation are essential to the responsible and responsive management of our nation’s natural resources. The public has a right to know about pollution levels, dangers to health and the environment, and proposed resource management policies and options. The public has a right to participate in decision-making at each phase in the process and at each level of government involvement. Officials should make a special effort to develop readily understandable procedures for public involvement and to ensure that the public has adequate information to participate effectively. Public records should be readily accessible at all governmental levels. Adequate funding is needed to ensure opportunities for public education and effective public participation in all aspects of the decision-making process.

The appropriate level of government should publicize, in an extensive and timely manner and in readily available sources, information about pollution levels, pollution-abatement programs, and resource management policies and options. Hearings should be held in easily accessible locations, at convenient times

and, when possible, in the area concerned. The hearing procedures and other opportunities for public comment should actively encourage citizen participation in decision-making.

The League supports public education that provides a basic understanding of the environment and the social, economic and environmental costs and benefits of environmental protection, pollution control and conservation.

Mechanisms for citizen appeal must be guaranteed, including access to the courts. Due process rights for the affected public and private parties must be assured.

(LWVUS, Impact on Issues, page 53)